

SEIUN

青雲

を
駆ける

KAKERU

2

illustration 3
Fumitoshi Hizen

肥
前
文
俊



Chapter 10 – The Commencement of Land Reclamation

The moon appeared.

The sky full of stars, illuminated lightly the dark night. Cries of birds and insects were heard.

Once people finished their meals, there was no spare time to admire the sky. Everyone had to go to bed early, and rise with the morning sun.

However, for Eiji's household it wasn't the time to sleep yet. Having finished the meal, he still had something to do.

Inside the dark room, Tanya's nose breathing could be heard.

It felt as though she couldn't endure leaking it.

On top of the mattress made from the straw and woven mat were two people.

Eiji extended his hand toward Tanya's back in her sitting position.

He could feel the soft sensation of her young skin, together with the dampness of her sweat.

Eiji stared at her dimly lit face.

– nnnh...aah...Eiji-san, please be more gentle.

– Is that so? But here it feels quite hard isn't it? look.

– aaah~~~~!

While she was bending shoulders, Tanya gave out a seductive sigh.

Her face's muscles became loose due to the pleasure.

You could notice her drool leaking out her mouth. It was clear that she felt greatly relaxed.

Eiji sensed the warmth in his hand coming from her body as its blood flow increased.

– If you hold onto them like that, it will be no good.

– How can you say that, after becoming like this...? Hey, be more honest with yourself.

-...So....

-So?

- So g-g...good.
- Yes, you did good.

As Eiji smiled, he took away his hand from her s-h-o-u-d-e-r m-u-s-c-l-e-s on which he grabbed.

Once her stiff muscles became loose, she became limp.

Getting a message after an exhausting day was part of their daily routine.

Was it because Tanya's not yet used to it? Her reactions were sensual, which was fun for Eiji, and it seemed like this kind of practice created an unintentional flow of words following after.

Tanya fell flat on her face while feeling her power drained. Technically, it was supposed to be Eiji's turn, but it seemed unlikely for it to happen.

Seeing how his wife began to fall asleep, he smiled gently, and put a mattress on her.

It was hard soil. The same thought came across Eiji's mind once he stood in front of the wheat field.

There were a lot of dried lumps of soil on the surface. What's more, you could see numerous weeds, sand, and small stones.

Even if you were to dig it out, there would be lots of thick stems and rocks, which was similar to the situation back in Tanya's backyard field.

As long there are stones and trees' stems, the vegetables won't have enough space to sprout, and eventually, become thin.

Small stones are also important for the soil, as they improve the drainage of the water; however, if they are too many, the ability to maintain water falls, causing the soil to dry quickly.

The panorama of the field, which expanded before his eyes, was very different from the one which Eiji heard of and imagined.

While listening to villagers' stories, Eiji could recall the same problem arising. First it was because their house areas were broad, making

their fields different from each other.

Because of that, methods of land reclamation were sporadic for each household as well. Therefore, there were no particulars regarding depth, size, and shape.

On the other hand, because harvesting and plowing is part of all the village's field work procedures, methods of doing them were different as well. As a result, the quality of the soil falls.

On top of that, there were complaints about the difficulty of moving too.

Furthermore, in order to let the soil rest, villages tend to set out livestock for pasturage. However, this is far from efficient.

In addition to making farming tools, Eiji had to listen to farmers' requests, which gave him an additional headache.

As he took some hard soil in hand, a voice coming from Mike was heard.

– Hey, what are you doing there?

– I'm thinking about reclaiming a field to make a new one. I plan to start from the one in front of tribal chief's house until the edges of the lands which I plan to adjoin.

Lastly, Eiji planned to carry out a four crop rotation system, but with the one the farmers are using at the moment, a two crop rotation one, it will make livestock and labor greatly insufficient.

Using a four crop rotation system, you have to divide a field into 4 quarters,

and rotate with them in order, such as a field in which you want to grow wheat, and another one for beans.

Because some of the fields are already in use, it would be better to arrange their soil.

And then, you should attach them with the newly made field.

As they will start to yield more and more crops by themselves, it would be fine to add them one by one, however, Eiji thought that it would be best to create some adjoining lands, and rearrange the environment.

There are around 60 people that make a living from farming. Eiji wanted to divide them between 3 teams, each with 20 people. He

intended to make them observe their own fields for 2 days, in which the first day would include rotation of the reclaimed land, just like what Eiji and others were doing now.

Even though he possesses the knowledge, Eiji is still new, therefore, his power to convince is still low. Mike who came just at the right moment was the rescue.

– Well, move move! Those people who don't understand how to use it, ask Eiji.

– I know this is a hoe, but how do you use it?

– Apart from the different shape, you use it just like your usual hoe. You use it to dig in deep parts, and remove the weeds and tree stems.

The hoe which Eiji prepared when going to reclaim a land was a shimada type^[1]. There are different types of hoes, among which are: hira-guwa, dou-guwa, bicchuu-guwa^[2]

The special feature of the shimada hoe is its sharp form, similar to a pointed shovel. It can break through hard soil, together with tree stems, and is commonly used in the Hokkaido region.

– Well, first, let's do some mowing.

– Let's brace ourselves and do it!

Two farmers named Bernard and Giorgio took scythes and went to the appointed land,

Before starting to mow the grass, they had scythes specially prepared for this purpose. The grass was left growing for many long years, to the extend it reached their chest level. Once mowed, the grass is put into one place, so as to later make it into compost. While Bernard and Giorgio were mowing, their raised voices could be heard.

– Wow, this is so light!

– This one is incredible!

Without realizing it, both of them gave out voices of admiration. Eiji's face became less tense. This was a great evaluation for Eiji. Assuming the villagers understand that their labor becomes much

more pleasurable, their dissatisfaction will disappear as well. Mike, while checking whether or not they're dissatisfied, sent a smile toward Eiji.

- Looks like there's no reason for us to worry.
- It's also thanks to Mike-san skilfully giving them the instructions.
- Well, I've been hanging out for a long time with them. I'm leaving now for some hunting, if there's anything you need, just tell John.
- Understood. Take care.
- Yeah, this evening, if it goes well, I'll treat you some food.

Mike left. While watching his back, Eiji put more spirit into it. There's no way for him to relentlessly watch over the job. Probably, there will be a need to mow a lot more grass.

- John-san
- Sup?
- I'd like to have you dig till this tree's pole. While clearing out large stones and stems, leave out the small stones.

During the process, trees which are present have to be cut down, and lots of stems have to be removed; therefore, a single day might not be enough.

However, if repeated steadily every day, it will cover vast amounts of lands. In order to minimize the anxiety of hunger every year, this was vital.

If the land reclamation becomes successful, there will be no need to do it next year.

Once the lumps of earth turn into sand, it will become much softer when mixed with compost. As a result, both the number of tools and livestock will increase, and the labor force will improve as well.

Seeing the prospects of bright future and the harsh reality, Eiji braces himself, believing that this is just the beginning.

Notes

1. Named after the city in middle of south-west in Japan. See [Wikipedia](#)

2. You can see the pictures [here](#).

From left to right are, respectively, hira-guwa, dou-guwa, bicchuu-guwa. (the picture with rectangular, rectangular with some rounds, and trident). hira-guwa is used for making ridges on a clay, dou-guwa – for digging on a soft soil, Bicchuu-guwa – for digging on clay. Well, this much should be enough

Chapter 11 – Soil Plowing

The reclamation of the land was slow, but certain.

At times when Eiji didn't have to forge anything, he would usually help with other works.

Because starting with a small scope is fine, finishing a whole course became his target.

Progressing little by little, a place which was all around big didn't appear to have an end.

Even if it's just a bit, if someone were to see a work being done, they would maintain the enthusiasm of continuing to work, having the progress visible in front of their eyes.

Eiji was now putting his spirit into mowing the grass. Holding quite a long scythe in his hands, he cut the grass from its bottom. As he continued to slouch, his legs and loins felt tense. While stroking his back, a certain farmer laughed next to him. His skin was sunburnt bluish black, and his nose was big. His white teeth could be seen radiating under his straw hat.

– Don't force yourself Eiji-san.

– Thank you. Bernard-san you're quite fast, ain't you?

– I do this kind of work every day, so I'm used.

Bernard had many years of experience. His movements using the scythe were fluent and certain. It was completely different from Eiji who was left behind, swinging his scythe many times. Eiji focused and moved his hands. When you fail to mow the grass, it will entangle with scythe, and the heavy recoil will be felt in your hands. From the mowed grass a greenish smell started to arise.

The grass could be used for different purposes, such as: livestock food, roof thatching, and field compost. Especially the last one, where you can mix with bull and pig manure. Even though it may take half a year to ferment, the effects are tremendous.

The great quantities of grass are gathered on the push cart. After that, it's put on a bullock cart and carried to the barn where it's

preserved.

Once the field is cleared of grass, various tree stems appear. It's now time to use the shimada hoes. As Eiji held the hoe, it felt quite heavy in comparison with the bronze one. In addition to its being made from iron, it was also larger.

While making use of its weight, he resolutely excavated the soil, using the tip of hoe. The feeling of hard soil recoiled back to his hands. However, in comparison with the time when he had done this labor using a bronze hoe, this one could dig deeper, and was much more fun.

If you put too much force into the hoe, the tip may break when hitting stones inside of the soil. Nevertheless, not doing so won't allow you to plow deep. Eiji kept plowing like there was no tomorrow. The rocks and stones started to roll inside the earth. As he continued his work, trying to avoid stones and rocks, his body started to sweat buckets.

Was it because he used much more strength than usual? He could feel his muscles becoming stiff. Thanks to the breeze, his body was soothed.

More than half a year had passed since Eiji arrived here, with now being September.

From the opposite side of the field, both Bernard and Giorgio act as stand-ins for a two head bull plow, in order to keep the good condition of soil. It was a plow which took lots of time for Eiji to make. In front there was a nata attached, so as to remove tree stems. Its long and big moldboard could turn over the soil. The front of the plow was attached with two wheels to allow easier maneuvering.

Despite that, it could only be used once the outer layer was removed, as it couldn't remove the stones inside.

Both Bernard and Giorgio, while using a plow which was hard to operate for the first time, were surprised at its effectiveness.

Of course both of them have used plows; however, none of theirs had wheels, and all of them were simple, light types of plows.

– When I had heard that I was supposed to do a task involving deep digging, I thought it would be something troublesome, but with this, it seems we can do it, Giorgio.

– Yeah. Let's do as much as we can.

Other farmers, once the rocks were removed from the soil, used an unbelievably big and squared needle-point holder, similar to a harrow, to narrow the lumps of earth.

Because doing it like that was light, they put the removed stones on top. Originally, Eiji wanted to let horses and bulls do the pulling work, but due to the low number of livestock, they had to limit it to using human force.

Once it finished, they put a sieve to the plowed soil. It was a basket type sieve made using bamboo knitted together with irregular eye holes. Nevertheless, it could effectively extract the small stones.

Because there were still small lumps of earth which were not pulverized, using the basket was handy as well. It is a hard labor, considering that they're lots of different stones.

When the land became clear, one could use a hoe to make rows.

– Eiji-san, in which direction do I make the rows? Should it be south and north wise? Or perhaps east and west wise? I was thinking about sowing green peas, but I'm not sure which direction would be the best.

– Well, shall we go with the east and west one?

Using the tip of the hoe to make the soil prosper, after a whole one day, only two tenth of rows were done, with the help of nearly twenty people.

However, from the field which had nothing, it started to show progress.

As the sun began to set, Eiji thought deep inside that it was a great beginning.

From the stove, the scent of roasted meat could be sniffed. From time to time, the sound of cracking generated by the surface of wood reverberated. Eiji was sitting in front of the table, awaiting the dinner. Opposite to him, was Mike drinking ale.

- Sorry for making you wait.
- That's fine, since not even I expected there to be a welcome party.
- Well, we are neighbors, ain't we? So we ought to eat together more often. Hey, want some ale?
- Thank you.

And the utensil containing ale spread it inside Eiji's exhausted body. Because the amount alcohol didn't seem to be high, Eiji, who wasn't good with alcohol, could enjoy it.

Inside the kitchen, Tanya and Jane stood next to each other. While exchanging opinions, both of them were thinking of a way to prepare the fresh deer meat.

The deer meat, or venison, could be made into some known dishes, such as sashimi, stew, and steak.

The meat was smelly, had little fat, and was hard to chew. Eiji learned from Mike that Jane was quite skillful in cooking. As he heard that, his stomach began to emit sounds of hunger. Finally, the fragrant smell of the meat wafted through the air.

- I made you wait. Well, let's eat.
- Eiji-san, it's hot, so please be careful.
- Yeah, bon appétit.
- Ohhh, it looks delicious. Did you wrap this using bacon?
- Because the deer meat had little fat, I thought of using some onions to add more flavor, so as to make it more delicious.

Once Eiji chewed some of the cut meat, the fat from the crisply roasted and hot bacon spread in his mouth. The hard meat's consistency, together with some lean deer meat and the sweet taste coming from the light brown colored onion, could be felt. On top of that, there was a mild taste of the fried juglans, and the refreshing kale.

- Delicious...

- Isn't it? I told you that my wife has great cooking skills.
- What are you saying? Tanya-chan, you should eat slowly. And you, my dear, eat before it gets cold.
- Jane-san is quite a tsun, Eiji.
- Truly, even in this lightly dark room you can see her face red.
- Eiji-san, please stop drinking that ale!

Eating the meat, biting the pan, and drinking soup, everyone was happy, being able to savor this luxurious dish and becoming content from time to time.

Mike, who was helping with field work, also had to help with this banquet. As one could expect, it must have been hard on him to hunt a deer.

On top of that, he is in charge of instructing.

Despite Mike being someone who finds it hard to compromise, once accepted, he really gives his best.

Eiji thought he would like to praise him on that.

And not only him, but Jane who was in charge of cooking too, and also all the farmers who cooperated.

While feeling the effects of the alcohol, these were his real intentions.

Eiji could feel it was not only his head that was affected by their kindness, but his heart as well. Such was the nature of this banquet.

Notes

1. juglans = walnuts
2. Tsun = Tsundere (Well, guess I don't have to explain, but just in case see [Wikipedia](#))

Chapter 12 – The Dream

The moment Eiji saw the scene before his eyes; he understood that it was a dream.

That was a Japanese-style room.

In the *rakujouma*^[1], one could see *wadansu*^[2], CRT type of TV and video cassettes lined up on the wall.

In the middle of the room, there was a *kotatsu*^[3], however, without a futon.

And most of all, inside of the *kotatsu*, someone who gave off the feeling of being very dear to him sat. That was his father, Eichi.

His arms, which were full of burn scars due to his everyday work forging, peeked out from his cuffs. Because of his continuous works nearby, his back was completely bent.

His eyes brimming with strong determination and his thick eyebrows were his features.

– Eiji... you came back? Sit.

– Yes.

As his father gave him this short command, Eiji sat in front of him.

For Eiji could sense the seriousness in his father's word, he did so without hesitation.

Once his father made sure Eiji sat, he stared at him fixedly.

Uff – his father grasped his breath.

Eiji wasn't good at dealing with that big and strong-willed man whose look made him falter.

On the other hand, Eichi's words were calm as usual.

However, if Eiji were to consider his father words, they had an impact.

– I received a call from your homeroom teacher. "Even though he gets excellence marks, it's a shame that he doesn't want to go to university" – is what he said. Your answer was, because you wanted to succeed my business, or so it seemed.

- Yes.
- Give it up.

Usually a parent would rejoice, hearing that their child want to inherit their business. Instead, Eiji could hear these words.

– Nowadays, smithing is no longer popular. Presently, even in this vicinity, the only smithing businesses to still be operating are the one from Yamada and ours. You don't have to feel responsible just because you're my oldest son.

– That's not true. I...want to do things which I like.

– What?

– Wasn't it you who said that true value comes not from the ready-made goods, but the ones which you deliver to every person? That this is the reason why the blacksmith workshop has a higher regards than factories? I'll succeed you, because, I love smithing.

– Eiji.

The reason why Eiji uttered these words spontaneously was due to him watching his father's back for many years, which made him understand how important for him this job was.

For Eiji, it wasn't strange to hear many workshops not being succeeded.

Presently, the number of businesses disappearing one by one, leave a little more than 100 smithing venues throughout Japan.

He wanted to change the current state of the smithing industry. As he believed it had the charm which was worth doing so.

Once Eiji said what he wanted to state, his chest was throbbing. The only thing remaining is to await the answer. His throat was sore and stinging.

Eichi had the expression of seeing a mysterious being.

As long as he can remember, he used to listen to his fathers' reasonable advice.

But for Eiji to blatantly oppose his father like this, it was probably the first time.

After Eichi was silent for a while, the next moment a smile appeared on his face.

– Haven't you become able to decide on your own? But, go to university.

– Father!

– Listen. Now, besides steel, there are a range of different alloys. The stained glass would be a perfect example. I'm not telling you to choose some random faculty. Was it metal engineering? If you to learn this subject of study, it will be useful for your future prospects, unlike me who only graduated middle school. When you have long session breaks, you can come to me any time. I'll make sure to teach you until you have enough.

Once he understood his father words, Eiji's face was brimming with a smile without him knowing it. He couldn't oppose that. Eiji was happy, more than anything.

– I'm saying that I'll teach you, but I'll not go easy on you. That's why I won't let you go. Got it?

– That's fine. Just tell me the things I want to know. I'll do my best.

– I'm going to slap that big-mouth of yours. ...Right. Let's celebrate this with sake. You're going to join me.

– I'm still a minor.

Once father took out a bottle of sake, he quickly poured some into a cup.

Eiji's field of vision began to fade away.

He could understand his consciousness was slowly returning.

That was a really dear part of his memory.

Even now, he can't go back to that.

Father—

He was leading a life with no anxiety for future, unaware of anything that could happen to him.

Tears began to flow from Eiji's cheeks.

Gon gon – a relentless sound could be heard echoing.

It was the sound of the water mill which shakes one's body to the core.

The sound of a pair of bellows blowing wind, the sound of the hot

burning furnace, and then the sound of striking metal, all of these sounds were harmoniously reverberating in the blacksmith's workshop.

– Master, this is quite a large number, isn't it? Do you intend to repair all of this?

– Yeah. It was beyond my expectations, but the hoe and the plough are still no good. Because of that, your work became more difficult, but please treat me well, Pietro.

– I'll do my best. However, it's still too early for me to do the finishing touches, isn't it?

– If you do the middle part, it should be fine. I understand that I'm rushing you but...

Inside the workshop, there were lots of hoe tips lined up.

These covered most of the things which Eji made, since the start of his job here.

The reason why they're being repaired is because most of them had the tooth part broken, due to land reclamation.

Perhaps, there was still too much carbon remaining than what he expected -is what he thought.

If there's too much of carbon in the steel, it will be hard and sharp, however, easy to break.

Or was it due to the large amount of stones? – he thought.

All the new hoe's tips which he prepared were to be used as replacements.

After that, Eiji considered extending the edge of the blade; nevertheless, this would take quite a lot of time.

Carefully heating the chipped blade's edge one by one, he cuts them using shears, and attach a new steel-made one. As for the one that were cut, he melts them again, so as to reuse.

And once the day was about to end, an unexpected guest visited.

That was Mike the hunter.

He was holding a leather scabbard with a somewhat large butcher's knife.

-That's rare for you to visit me. Do you have any request?

– Yea. It'll soon be autumn. So if we don't make our cows and boar livestock into a smoked product, it will be bad. I'd like to entrust you with this knife.

As he said, Mike handed Eiji the butcher's knife.

– It cuts well through skin and fat, so it's a good knife. I know what you're capable of, therefore, I'd like to have you make me another, but with a smaller size.

– But, why do you want to use it for smoking?

Mike became unusually silent after hearing this simple question coming from Eiji. For someone like him, it was bound to happen, since he had never endured the winter in this village. The atmosphere turn silent due to this common question, but Eiji couldn't understand that.

Because there are no developed techniques of preservation in this era, it would be better keep the stock alive – he honestly thought.

– That's right you... Don't cha know that during the winter, there's no grass or weeds growing? Therefore, you won't be able to supply the livestock with enough food. Even if it's just a little, it's better to kill them and take their meat, rather than letting them die from starvation.

-Oh... I see. Because this is the first time that I'm introducing the crop rotation system here, it would be natural. Sorry, it didn't cross my mind.

– Seriously, won't you brace yourself? Just how absentminded can you be?

Ahaha- Eiji laughed, while trying to cover up his gaffe, and scratched his head.

Because life here was different from what he would normally expect, lots of discrepancy could be noticed in various aspects of life.

– So, by when do you want me to make it?

– I think that by the next week would be good. There are going to be six other hunters helping me with preserving livestock. So just make as many as possible.

– Understood. I still have to make the hoes, so I don't know how many I will be able to forge. ...Speaking of which, you extract the fat

when you do the smoking, right?

– Oh, you're quite knowledgeable ain't you? There's usually some remaining, but we do take out the fat.

– In that case, If you don't need, would you mind sharing it with me?

– Well, there is not much of a use for it, and we can't preserve the fat, so you can have as much you like. What do you intend to use them for?

– For soap. Because my work involves producing a large amount of ash, I was thinking of any other use for it, besides from the field work.

For Mike who wasn't familiar with soap, Eiji explained it to be simply something used to clean off dirt.

Unlike smithing, this was a real, first challenge for him.

Eiji didn't know how far it will work; however, he knew this challenge was worth doing.

Notes

1. Six tatami-mat room (I think some of you have heard, like for instance, from this anime: [Youtube link](#))
2. Japanese chest drawers.
3. Japanese Table frame. During cold days it's usually used together with kotatsu (blanket). See [Wikipedia](#)

Chapter 13 – Beef Tallow Soap and the Lonely Night

Well then, shall we make some soap?

Despite thinking so, Eiji didn't have any particular memory of making soap.

The only memory he had of substances was once during his science practice in his school years, when he had an article about the purified substance consisting of glycerin and caustic soda.

He only had the faint knowledge about soap that making it requires mixing animal fat and ash together.

Despite that, once he makes the soap using his own hands, it will be enough for him to imagine.

Because simply using the ash as it is was wrong, he assumed that, just like the caustic soda, he had to separate the components in a liquid state.

Then, while thinking of a way to deal with it, the method of dissolving it inside water and filtering it popped up inside his head.

However, making a good filter, which has narrow eye holes, isn't an easy task.

Using a cotton cloth was as well out of question, as the cloth will hold most of the substance.

When talking about filtration, the thing which comes up to one's mind would be a water filter.

Wait, didn't I once pile up stones and pebbles to make a filter?

As Eiji looked around in search of item which could help him, the voice of Tanya using the winnower was heard.

– Are you looking for something?

– Not really, I was just thinking about trying to make a filter.

– filter...? What's that?

– Hm, it's something similar to a screen (sieve), but more narrow.

– Shouldn't you try using straw instead?

- Aah, that's right. If I put some stones on it... Thank you. Later, I'd like to have this bucket.
- Do you plan to make something again?
- Yea. Well, please look forward to what I'm going to make.
- I will. Ah, wait a bit.
- What?
- Please do your best.

Eiji was kissed on his cheek.

In addition, a gentle kiss was shared on both of his cheeks, and lips.

Eiji smiled bashfully.

Just a moment ago, he hadn't thought he would be this happy.

Eiji sensed more motivation, saying "give it your best."

In the end he put the stones and pebbles in the straw, and made a hole in the bucket, in which he places the straw.

Above that he arranges the big pebbles, and on top of them the smaller ones, making the eye holes smaller and smaller.

He covers it with ash, and flushes it with water. However, even if it were much narrower, the component he wanted would only seem to be getting extracted. On top of that, the holes were rough, allowing the foreign matter to seep through in great amounts.

- It's quite hard, isn't it...?

After rearranging the pebbles about four times, a light-brown liquid was successfully extracted.

As the liquid was dripping, Eiji used a bottle to store it.

Because he didn't know how much animal fat he is going to get, he considered that it would be best to store a lot of liquid.

From time to time he adds some ashes and water.

Unlike before, Eiji felt as if his heart was trembling and floating with excitement, thinking about his first work.

- Hey, I have the fat you requested.
- Thank you. ...Stinks! It stinks unbelievably!

- Well, I guess for someone who isn't used to this kind of smell, that would be the natural reaction?
- Is this the smell coming from cattle?
- Yea. This one was from a female cow which was too old to produce milk anymore.

What Mike was holding in his hand was a turtle shell

^[1] full of animal fat. Anyway, it was quite heavy.

It was heavy to the extent that one would have to hold it tightly. Its weight was around 30 kilos. From what Eiji saw, the cattle in the vicinity are quite light. That much probably wouldn't satisfy one's appetite.

Compared to the corpulent cattle from Eiji's memory, this one wasn't even half as heavy as that.

Still, to be able to get this much fat...

Once he opened the lid, the dreadful smell of an animal, together with its blood, could be sensed.

It doesn't seem to be half bad, but it doesn't look like I can use it – he thought.

It was full of white fat.

Was it because of the time taken to gather it? The fact that it became sordid was a pain. Eiji had to separate the pure form of the fat from the rest.

Even after taking the turtle shell outside, the smell of the animal wouldn't come off him.

Once it becomes successful, there's more reason for him to hand some soap to Mike – thought Eiji.

- What do you intend to make, using that?
- Soap.
- Soap? What kind of thing is that?
- It's used to clean from dirt, I think.
- Ah, I see. You mean the ash which appeared after roasting that meat. I've got some clothes which became dirty, so you can use them.
- I plan to make it more effective.
- That's fine. I'm looking forward to it.
- Well, for me, it's the first time making it, so I don't know how it will

turn out.

- If it's animal fat, you can have as much as you want... you can try to make it many as times as you want.
- While we are speaking of amount, how much exactly you have...?
- Ten turtle shells of this size should be more than enough. Use them quickly.
- Ha, hahaha.

It turned into quite a difficult situation.

As Eiji was worrying about how long the work will take, Mike thanked him and left the place. Eiji quickly began working.

Eiji filled a pot half full with water, and set it on the fire.

Once it reached the right temperature, he added the fat.

As the temperature kept rising, the smell became more intensive.

-It was the right decision to do this outside.

While muttering these words without thinking ahead, he stirred the pot.

Small fragments of meat and tendon, together with some other parts of the insides, which couldn't be taken out completely, floated on the surface. At the same time, foreign matter began to sink.

The hot water became muddy in the blink of an eye, as oil started to float on the surface.

After removing the floating debris, the only thing remaining would be to wait until it cools off.

Once the oil on surface cooled off, it became a white mass.

Eiji moved it to a new turtle shell.

If you were to compare it with the one before, the color of substance turned much whiter, and the smell improved.

As he threw away the remaining hot water, he poured in some more fresh water while repeating the same action twice.

Compared to the amount of fat before, there was much less remaining in the in turtle shell this time. Was it around 25 kilos? There seemed to be a sufficient amount of them accumulating.

Because the smell was too strong, Tanya came out to observe the situation from the outside. She won't come any closer than the gate.

- The smell this time is terrible.
- Pardon me. Just a little while and I think it will fade away.
- (Sighing)

While knowing that the creation of a new product this time is, unlike before, unusual, Eiji had a troubled face. However, he kept on continuing.

Since whenever he started involving other people in his projects, he would always carry them out till the end.

The work continued from the morning till noon, which was now.

Tanya, who managed to calm down, called him for the lunch, once she finished the preparation.

The main menu for the lunch was a cow steak.

Was it because the cow was old, or perhaps, due to the cow not sunbathing enough? Anyway, the meat was a little bit hard; however, once Eiji took a bite of it, the fat began to spread slowly but steadily inside his mouth.

It was tasty, just like the deer meat he had the other day. Recently, meals became more luxurious.

Perhaps, it was a kind of luxury before the winter.

As Eiji used the knife and fork, he continued to cut the meat.

Until he became able to make use of iron, despite having knife, they used bare hands, instead of forks, which brought back the memories.

Back then, when Eiji used a pair of chopsticks, Tanya looked at him with curiosity on her face. She couldn't learn how to use them; however, if it was a fork, she could learn it relatively easy. Once learned about the effectiveness of it, there was no longer the need to dirty one's hand, and the custom of using it spread throughout the village.

After Eiji satisfied his stomach, he went back to making the soap.

- I wonder how it should be made...

First, he tried to make it using small amount.

As he dissolved some fat inside the pot, he put some ash mixture together with water, and then set it on fire.

So as to keep the components fused, he kept stirring the pot, and

waited until the water amount reduced.

As it became thicker and more concentrated, so did the viscosity, little by little, slowly turning into a gel.

– Well, it doesn't seem to turn into a lump, so I wonder how it will go.

He scooped it with a ladle and put it onto the dirty cloth.

However, it didn't seem to foam, and the impurity became more prominent than the water, and didn't seem to decrease.

– I wonder if I've put too little of ash mixture

A second trial.

This time Eiji took the previous mistakes into consideration, and added more ash mixture.

– This time too! ...failed again?

He sighed with a puff.

It doesn't seem to be going in a better direction than the first.

After Eiji cleaned the pot, he tried once more, from the beginning.

– How about this...?

As he added a small amount of water, foam, which felt slimy, started to generate, and the impurity began to decrease.

– Oh, just for a moment, it succeeded. Then the last thing remaining is to match the best proportion of ash mixture and fat, and see how stable it will be.

After trying to apply the same pattern five times, Eiji managed to find most suitable ratio.

It looks like the best ratio for bubbles to start foaming was 1 to 0.75 (fat to ash mixture), and it didn't seem to be harmful for the skin.

Once he grasped the necessary amount, he would be able to mass produce it.

As he measured the components using a ladle, he put them in the same proportion.

Once the big pot started to produce a gel-form soap, Eiji used another jar to store it.

– It's done!

The day was nearing its end quickly, as one would notice.

Eiji sweated as he spent a long time staying in front of the fire; nevertheless, in comparison with his daily work, he could at least feel the wind's breeze, which was much more comfortable for his stamina.

– Is it over?

– Yes, with this thing, soap, we will be able to clean off the dirt.

– Eiji-san, being able to make everything, you're really impressive. Somehow, I've got the feeling that an exceptional person became my husband.

– No, it's not like that...

– But, the senbagoki which I use, the winnower, the knife and fork, all of them were made by you, weren't they?

– It's just that I happened to know of them.

– I think that there's a difference between having knowledge of something and being able to exercise it. You should be proud of yourself.

– I'm not the kind of person to feel proud.

Hearing Tanya's kind words, Eiji sensed a warm feeling inside his heart.

Even if he denies it verbally, he couldn't help but to feel happy.

Even more so, because it was a challenge he isn't normally used to doing.

Being moved by his beloved wife's kind words, Eiji hugged Tanya.

Was it because she combed her hair? It seemed to be charming and silky.

The last thing to do would be to add some lavender and chamomile, to give the soap more fragrance, and then present it to Tanya.

As he was contemplating about future, he became filled with happiness.

Once they both finish their meals, he intended to make sure of their love tonight.

Despite that their life was still unstable, Eiji thought about wanting to have a child.

But...

– Sorry...

– Tanya-san?

While being gently hugged, Tanya slipped out from the embrace. From her expression, a feeling of regret and trouble could be sensed.

– Forgive me Eiji-san, but, this night, please sleep alone.

– W-why...?

Why did it turn to this kind of reaction?

Eiji couldn't comprehend that.

Judging from Tanya's previous words, he wouldn't expect any sort of denial.

She kept silent for a while, so you'd consider that as consenting.

Tanya opened her mouth timidly.

– It's because Eiji-san is...incredibly...

– Eh?

–Incredibly stinking of animal fat...

As she looked like regretful, Tanya turned around and went back inside the house.

Ah, so it was because of that...

I was due to his nose getting used to the smell, but he soon realized that it was the same feeling when he met Mike.

Surely, if one's body were to stink like that, sleeping on the same mattress would be out of question.

Although he understood that, Eiji couldn't fully agree.

There was rarely a day in which his body would remain fit till night, after the labor.

Not to mention that his very first days included field works, together with his muscle pains and having to sleep being not saturated with food.

Eiji followed Tanya's silhouette with eyes of a small puppy being abandoned.

– Why did it turn out like this...?

He hung his head with disappointment.

The following day.

– Pietro, good work. Today, I'd like to have you make something else, besides sharpening.
– What? Please tell me everything!
– Oh, thanks. In that case, it will be quick, but I'll tell you the making method.

— I want him to make the soap, in my place.

Since then, it was said that Eiji took the initiative, and didn't have to make the soap.

Notes

1. This word consisted of a single character, meaning "turtle". When I tried to browse some more info regarding any possible container made from a turtle, there was none. After asking some translators, they suggested me to use "turtle shell", which I see reasonable as well.

Chapter 14 – The Heart of Japan, Ofuro

[1]

Not being inferior to Eiji, Pietro was quite skillful as well.

The following day, Pietro, who endeavored in making the soap without making any grimace, produced a soap far better in smell than what he had done in the past two days.

When Eiji asked the reason behind it, the answer was opposite to his expectation, and couldn't get any simpler.

At the time when Pietro boiled water and oil, being about to proceed with the purification, he put a little bit of soil and ash, making it much easier to separate the components.

This was something Eiji didn't think of. He couldn't expect that Pietro, who was a total novice about soap, would come across this idea.

Once he tried to inquire for more details, Eiji learned that it wasn't just Pietro alone who discovered this, but it also was Jane who gave some assist to him.

Jane is the wife of a hunter, so she would be familiar with animal disassembling and leather processing. For her to naturally know of such techniques would be normal.

Because until now, there hadn't been as many foreign matters removed, the number of fat that could be collected fell off. Nevertheless, this yielded great results.

Once the soap was completed, Eiji squeezed some of rotten citrus fruits and applied its smell on the soap.

He stuffed the soap with the aroma, which was only enough for a small pot, into a pot and placed the cover firmly on it.

He planned to give it as a present to Tanya.

Due to Eiji continuously burning the fat, you could notice Tanya's mood getting worse.

Even though the smell coming from his body should be gone, he was still sleeping in a separate bed. Eiji felt like he was being ordered like a dog.

- Sorry for having you covered with that smell. Did you parents mention anything about it?
- They were surprised at first, and asked what that smell was.
- That would be expected...I guess
- But, master, when I told them that you invent new things, and that I'm helping master, they began rooting for you. There's no doubt that master will make convenient things, or so it felt from them.
- Seems like I've got them to believe in me.

Normally, it would be hard for someone to trust an outsider – is what Eiji thought.

Because the lifestyle is different, no matter how much time passes, an adult won't get used to someone else's specific customs.

Eiji also heard rumors about people moving from cities to the countryside becoming ostracized, and not being able to get used to their surroundings.

He was prepared for this scenario, but...

- Back then we would be happy when the seeds we had sowed started to bud numerously, which made us think like it was the blessing coming from the earth god.
- Is that so...?

As expected, this would be perhaps the sole reason why people believed that more harvest crops, and more abundant life, was due to deity.

It's more the reason for Eiji not to neglect his smithing.

Killing the livestock so as to gather the required fat could be only done in seasons like this. Therefore, Eiji thought that this was the only chance to do so.

- Pietro, I have a task which might bother you, but... go and bring me some dried fish.
- No, this is a part of my job as well.
- You're still a child, so don't be so reserved.

As Eiji gently brushed his head, Pietro felt as if being warded off by the ticklish sensation.

Still, was it because he could feel Eiji's courtesy? Pietro bowed down and thanked him.

- Well then... thank you!!
- Once I make as much as I can, I'll have you come back to the workshop and teach you some new skills. Till then, please have some faith in me.
- Yes, please treat me well.

Pietro started to tidy up. Using his body's recoil, he skillfully raised up the heavy water jug filled with river water, and placed it in a pot. Even though he's still a minor, he has quite the strength.

I'll entrust you with the tidying up – said Eiji, as he went back to the workshop.

Using the resharpened and remade scythes and hoes, Eiji went to the field.

The field was reclaimed a bit, and the number of ridges increased. Not much time passed since the start so you couldn't expect much; however, little by little it began to accumulate.

The reclaimed land was exceptionally light, in comparison with a wasteland, and its texture was much tenderer.

It was probably thanks to the diligent use of the sieve (screen), crushing lumps of earth, and removing stones.

It's a work that requires much patience, and there are no cutting corners.

Even if neither Eiji nor Mike were watching, you could understand that this village is full of people trying to progress with their work diligently.

Once Bernard noticed the silhouette of Eiji, he took off his straw-hat and smiled.

Unlike his sunburned skin, his teeth were exceptionally white.

Seeing that expression directly, Eiji felt like he was being dazzled by it.

- Long time no see, Eiji-san
- That's true.
- The new tools which you made are fine, but there's something we

wanted to tell you.

- Naturally, is there anything that gives you a trouble?
- No, I planned to go quickly for seed sowing, but, haven't you mentioned before that the sowing method was wrong?
- Oh, you mean when I told you not to sow from above. Is that it?
- That's right, it's that! I was surprised by that method! As expected, Eiji-san you're a genius.

It was the story from yesterday.

Once Eiji heard from Giorgio and Bernard about their method of sowing seeds, he doubted his ears. It appeared that they were sowing it from the middle of the air.

What's more, they neither cover it with earth, nor pour with water. Because of that, the chances of the buds growing are very slim.

It seemed that due to their forefathers passing down this method, they had no reason to doubt it.

You could consider it a classic example of a convincement and imprinting, which hindered any possibility of improvement.

– You ought to open a hole first, then plant the seeds inside. Once done, you cover it gently with soil. Lastly, you pour lots of water on top.

– Opening holes, one by one, is really troublesome, isn't it? Not to mention watering. If it's around this size, then I see no problem, but if it's a much bigger field, it will require much more of effort.

– I'll make the sowing tool, but I won't make the required number in time. Hm, if there's no means of drawing the water to field, it won't do... will it?

– It doesn't seem to ease our job, even a little.

– The more you do, the more crops it should yield. It's not immediate, so let's do our best for that to happen.

-....That's right. Complaining won't solve anything, will it?

Eiji smiled bitterly at Bernardo who seemed to be upset.

If one were to be discourage by this much, then even doing collaborative works won't be enough to complete land reclamation.

However, it didn't bother Eiji.

Night, the flambeau (torch), which rarely had been used, was lighted, illuminating through the darkness.

Looking at the sky, it was as always, full of stars.

And down at the bottom, there was large amount of hot water.

The vapor was floating in the sky. It was an ofuro made from bricks and tiles. The bath was wide by itself, and used for collaborative purposes.

– Aaah, this feels good. How many months has it been, I wonder...?

Without thinking ahead, Eiji gave out the voice. He could feel the warmth and the pleasant feeling coming from his insides.

What Eiji thought to make, since he had been picked up by Tanya, was a Japanese bathroom.

Even though there was a simple facility, similar to that of a water sewer, there were no bathrooms.

Still, there are bath practices, so there was no need to worry of getting dirty; nevertheless, it was certainly not the same as a bath. – is what he thought.

Ofuro are not just used for cleaning the dirt, it also soothes one's heart from tiredness and stagnation.

In order to make this bathroom, different procedures had to be taken. First, so as to strengthen his position as a villager, Eiji had to fulfill his duty.

Once his true skills were acknowledged, he could ask, little by little, for some administrative help.

And with that he was able to carry out his wishes, while still making contributions to the village.

Bathing custom too was one of those.

Eiji had Fernando to help in its construction, despite him being busy. However, there was no roof and no walls, so it could be considered as something similar to a rotenbu^[2]

Eiji had plans of adding them to the bathroom, but it wasn't clear how much time it would take.

Regarding the use, it would be the best to make it into an public bathroom, otherwise it would require many people to scoop and heat water.

- Tanya-san, doesn't it feel good?
- Yes, it feels like all the energy is running out of my body.
- Once your body warms up, use the soap to wash yourself, ok?

While submerging his body to his shoulders, he looked at his wife's silhouette.

Eiji wasn't able to clearly see her naked body, as it was dark; however, he could see it illuminated by torchlights.

Recently, due to her rich diet, Tanya gained some mass.

It seemed like she became even more feminine.

Eiji followed her with his eyes, starting from her wet, long hair touching the water, through her nape, till her gently-sloping collarbone.

Before his eyes could reach her big breasts, Tanya hid them using her hands.

Her face was red from embarrassment.

- Ah...
- Please don't stare at me that much.
- It's because you're beautiful.
- I'm not going to fall for your flattery.
- These are my true feelings.
- Ain't you just intending to look at me, while saying that?
- It's not that I want to just look.

Because they're husband and wife, Eiji wanted to touch a little. Were it not for being married, he probably wouldn't stare at her.

....However, that beautiful woman is his wife.

Eiji is more of a type who thinks it is fine to do what he wants.

Thinking that way, he couldn't help but feel happy.

He wanted to know more, as well as let her know about many different things.

As Eiji moved inside the bathroom, he turned toward her back, and entwined her limbs with his hands.

- Because it's your first time using soap, I'll teach you how to use it.

– I don't need it. Isn't it the thing which you have recently made? Doesn't it stink?

– That's all right. I considered that and made something better.

After he showed her a small bottle with the soap inside, he opened the lid.

Tanya's face became radiant, as she smelled the floating fragrance, which surpassed her expectations.

She leaned her head forward and took a peek inside the bottle. Her nostrils twitched once they smelled the aroma.

Her face became spellbound.

–It smells good.

– Doesn't it? I squeezed the fruit called Tapuche.

– You did it because you were concerned about me saying that it stinks?

– Just a bit.

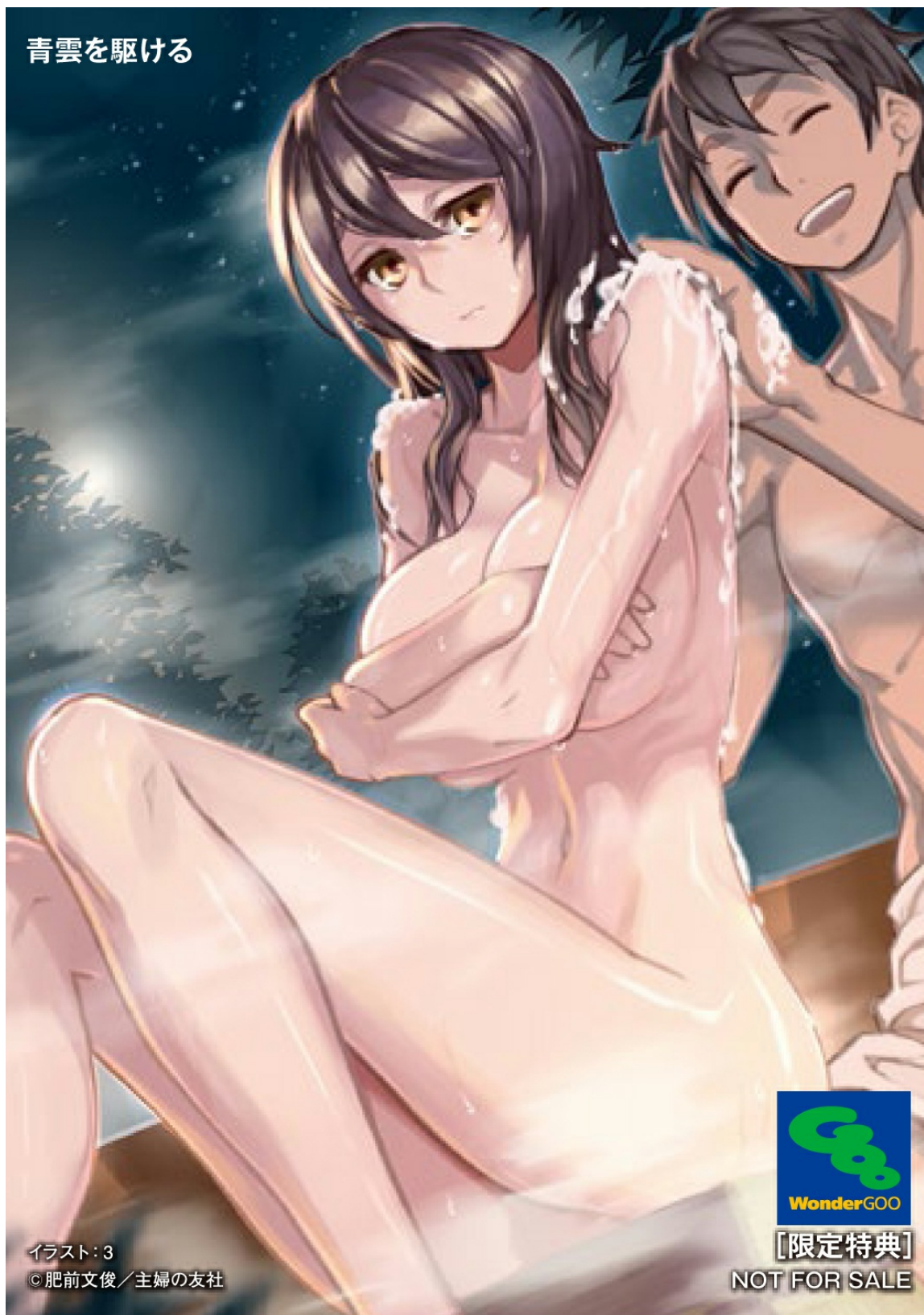
– ...Thank you. Eiji-san, you really are incredible. Not only do you make convenient stuff, but also you try to improve once there's a problem arising.

– Well then, stand up. Let's test it quickly.

– Ah, wait.

As he made her half-forcefully sit on the chair, Eiji took the gel-form soap and rubbed them, to make bubbles. Comparing with the one which he once used for chemistry purposes, this produced much less foam; however, it was still enough.

Using his hands covered with foam, Eiji made his hands crawl on Tanya's whole body, under the pretext of teaching her it's application.



- It's slimy and feels kinda strange...
- It feels good, doesn't it?
- yes, but... it feels ticklish. Ah!
- And it's so easy to remove the dirt.

– It's true. wow, to think that you could make this using that fat...

Seeing how Tanya admires the soap made him really pleased.

Eiji finished cleaning her back.

From the back, which was a hard place to reach by yourself, Eiji moved his hands toward Tanya's waist and her armpit. But once he did so, she raised her voice.

– Where are you touching...ah, I, I knew it, Eiji is a pervert after all!

– Look, you have to wash your whole body to make it clean, don't you?

– T-the way you use your hands is lewd...ah!

Being reprimanded by his wife, Eiji felt fun while washing each other.

After that, Tanya became sullen, but whenever both of them entered bathroom together, she couldn't deny her true emotions.

– Eiji-san, it seems like the peddler arrived last night. Do you intend to see him?

– The peddler, you say?

A peddler usually comes several times to a village.

The reason why Eiji couldn't meet one till now was because he was occupied with examining blacksmithing works, and being busy with guiding the field works. Therefore, he had no occasion.

Because working in this village was self-sufficient for him, if asked whether there's something that he wants to buy, Eiji wouldn't bother with that. On contrary, he had something which he wanted to sell. That was soap.

It would be nice to exchange them for some pieces of cloth, since winter was soon arriving.

Due to him taking that matter lightly, Eiji didn't bother to brood any deeper about the significance of peddlers. This, however, made him regret later.

Notes

1. Japanese type of bath. See [Wikipedia](#)
2. Open air baths. These type of baths are usually present in hot springs (onsen). See [Wikipedia](#)

Chapter 15 – The Peddler

The horse cart of a peddler stopped in the middle of village, right in front of the tribal chief's house.

Due to the exceptional size of tribal chief's house, it's often used to welcome guests from the outside.

The horse of the peddler, which was one size bigger than the ones raised in this village, was fastened to the tree next to the house, where it was gulping down water from a bucket.

As it noticed Eiji approaching, it looked at him straightly with its pupils.

You could feel the pressure coming from inside of those big, black radiant pupils.

Since arriving at this village, Eiji had no opportunity to get in touch with a horse.

In the end, is it fine to come near it? – is what he felt with anxiety.

– If you approach it carelessly, you're going to be kicked.

The voice which reached Eiji's ears was coming from a big man.

He wasn't tall; nevertheless, his body was thick with muscles.

His face was squarish and his hair was brown with a reddish tinge. In addition, they were pointy, short, and trimmed up toward the sky, just like bristles.

Despite every single part on his whole body being big, only his eyes were small and became narrower once he smiled, just like its veins.

On the front of his forearms and forehead were scars from cuts.

Because Eiji had never seen this man before, he understood that he's the one called the peddler.

– A new face, ain't you? Is there anything you want to buy?

– There are lots of things I'd like to discuss with you.

– Discussion? Fine. So let me know its detail.

Once the man tried to speak, his choice of words became less formal, and his accent turned gentler.

However, if he were indeed gentle, then he wouldn't have those scars on his forehead.

There ought to be a ferocious personality suitable to that appearance of his.

Eiji thought about how to start the conversation.

Starting from bringing out the topic regarding soap would probably be a bad idea.

As for Eiji, who wanted to acquire more information what's outside of the village, beginning the topic with soap would probably have him mesmerized.

– First, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Eiji, and I'm the blacksmith in this village.

– Thank you for your kindness. My name's Jean, and as you can see, I'm a peddler. So it was because of you, my boy, that this village didn't see a need to buy my hoes.

– I'm still inexperienced, and most of the things I've made need to be repaired.

– Don't fret. This will improve together with your skills. I think that having someone like you in this village is very precious. That's why you should abandon challenging that fragile iron, and instead properly use the bronze.

It seemed that the man had already noticed the replacement of bronze with iron, which was an impact that made Eiji sweat profusely. However, it looks like Jean believed him on the part of being inexperienced.

Eiji nodded deeply, as he understood that it was the kind of advice in which failure contributes to one's growth.

– That's right, you see, not much time has passed since I came here, so there's still much I don't know about my surroundings. Jean-san, how many villages have you visited so far?

– Me? I've stopped in every village on this island.

– Island, so it's an island?

– Hm? Yea. I stayed for a few days in every one of them, so it took about three months to make a full circle. That is how long it would take to fully travel this island.

- How many villages did you visit in total...?
- I guess around 30?
- How big would this village be?
- I think it's quite big. There are even small settlements with around 50 people that are somehow managing.
- And in case of big ones?
- The biggest I've seen belonged to a landlord, and has around 400.

As Jean's words kept piling up, Eiji felt that the truth was far from what he expected.

He imagined at first that trading with foreign countries would be done on land, or at least this geography was in his mind.

Because there are no paved roads, it was hard to estimate how far he would reach within a single day. Eiji understood, however, that this island wasn't unrealistically big, and that the population was low. In this village there were around 250 people. Assuming there are more of such villages than the average number, then it would be about 200 per each. Together with the small settlements, it would be just around 6000 something people.

As his head started to get dizzy, his view became obstructed. It made him start having troubles with breathing.

- Hey, are you alright? Your face seems to be pale.
- No, I'm fine

Having that pointed out, Eiji came back to reality.

While he was forcibly controlling his breathing, he calmed himself down.

Even though he cannot wish for any radical development, there was a low chance for his skills to become a problem.

Because the possibility of leaking it to the outside was low, it was fine to monopolize technology on this island.

Eiji switched to a more positive thinking.

If one were to accept this state and live one's whole life like this, then dependent upon one's thinking it would be enough of a favorable condition.

- Fernandez^[1] who lives in this village said that the people from the other side of the water^[2] come to this island, but it seems like they're

making business with some country.

– Hm...? No, there are no such people on this island. They're probably people stranded by the water. In the first place, however far you may look out over, there's no sign of other islands

– Is that so...? So it's a solitary island?

– Yea, more or less like that. And my job is to tie the distance between villages.

Jean tapped his arm. The smile on his whole face, which revealed his teeth, seemed to show that he held pride in his job.

Certainly, if there are no trading routes on the water, then the role of a peddler is exceptionally big.

– Anyway, I learned what I wanted to know. Thank you.

– I don't mind. Then, did you decide on what you want to buy?

– Yeah, that's right. Do you have cooking oil and some pieces of cloth?

– I've got macadamia oil. As for cloths, I have high quality one with tightly knit eye-hole pattern. I am ready to exchange them for something else.

– Can I take a look at the cloth?

– Yea, just a moment.

After Jean went inside the house of tribal chief, he came back and brought the cloth.

You could tell that it was carefully produced even without saying.

Nevertheless, there was a small stain, probably, due to flushing it with water

Eiji took out the soap which was inside the jar.

– What's that?

– It's called soap.

– It's white and feels slimy. What do you use it for?

– You use it to remove the stain. This cloth is a little bit dirty.

– Well, I had it washed before, but looks like it got stained with dust while on my way here. It can't be helped.

– Can I borrow one?

– Yeah, I don't mind.

– How about you soak it in the water, then smear and rub it with the soap...?

- H-Hey! The way the dirt comes off, isn't it completely different?!
- W-what's that?!
- It's called soap.
- I know its name, but I want to know how you made it! Is this the only one you have?!

While surprised, Jean draw closer to Eiji.

The piece of cloth, which he held in one hand, was pretty clean. In the other hand, the stain, which had fallen off, rested. It was mixed together with the oil content.

- I can't tell you the process of making it. As for the amount, I've more than 10 pieces of turtle shells, but still, I can make it only during a specific time.
- Does it contain a material which has something to do with the seasons?
-Well, you could say so.

Regardless of him being completely surprised, once he got in touch with an unknown object, he had a sharp guess drawn within a moment from the conversation.

I can't say unnecessary things – deemed Eiji, thinking that he ought to carefully choose his words.

- But, it's not the only feature of that soap.
- What?!
- Once you regularly wash clothes using this, it will reduce the number of lice. As for acari (taxon and mites) and fleas, it won't help much, since there is livestock. However, if you get bit by a louse, then it's bye bye.
- Hey...
- Yes?
- Give me as much as you can.

Jean's gaze was grave.

One could imagine how the trade would prosper from using soap.

The peddler, who had the vision of profits in front of his eyes, while remaining calm, glared at Eiji in wish.

But Eiji didn't intend to sell it cheap.

Besides him, only Pietro knew how to make it.

This could mean nothing but raising the value of this precious item.

- How about this much?!
- Won't do.
- And this much?!
- Not enough, not enough.
- How about this much!?
- Do you honestly think that this much would do?
- I'm already at my limit!
- Shout once more!
- Alright! With this it should be fine! How is that, are you content?!
- Yes, this much should do.
- Honestly... you're a hell of a skillful negotiator ain't you?

Jean was gasping with breath, whereas Eiji had a face of chuckling to himself.

Quite a lot of items from the horse cart's freight were exchanged. In addition to cotton cloths and knitting wool, there were precious metals, such as gems, gold, and silver. Other than that, Eiji got oil, salt, and dried meat.

With this, it will be exceptionally easy to endure the winter, and even have much in stock remaining.

Even if he were to pass some to the village, it would still be a lot. However, this could prove to be a far better profit for Jean, and will probably pay off.

Eiji was quite curious to what extent could soap yield profits.

- Ah, by the way...
- What? I won't give you any more than this.
- That's not what I mean. If I can have you collect waste oil from other villages, and bring them here, I'm sure you'll be happy.
- Heh?...Fine, I got it. I'll promise you that.

As their negotiation talk ended, they exchanged a handshake.

With that, it would mark the beginning of a great turmoil beyond anyone's expectation.

1. Yes, I checked it twice and it was Fernandez (not Fernando). I assume Eiji wanted to use a fake person as an argument.
2. I used before the word sea, but it seems I wasn't right with my decision. Apparently, the word "umi can be used to describe seas, oceans – so generally, any big land that contain water. Therefore, I've decided to put this instead of sea. You will see why, as you continue to read.

Chapter 16 – Outside of the Village

Eiji's manufactured goods covered most of the village. He wouldn't have thought that he would be making tools, and there were lots of iron goods in his vicinity.

The iron nails, which are among the topic, used to be produced only by factorial industries, nevertheless, they were now handmade. Amid the iron goods, there were 3 which had been highly welcomed in the village.

First – farming tools, second – cooking tools, like pots and kitchen knife, and lastly – sewing tools.

Because domestic industry is common in this period, sewing for each individual is considered to be a wife's job.

What's more, the materials used in sewing mostly consist of furs, whereas, cotton is only reserved for rich households.

The firm iron nail, which is able to pierce through heavy and hard furs, received an ardent welcoming from the villagers.

Using the same nail, Eiji made round trips with high-grade hemisphere-shaped cloths.

The nicely cut hemispheric pieces of cloths kept being sewn together and decorated with an embroidery.

After making two of these cloths, he extended from them, vertically, two cords and joined both of them using a hook.

That was a bra.

Having obstinately repeated size measuring, Eiji created the surface of the cloths, perfectly matching Tanya's chest. In addition to that, he garnished it with a flower embroidery.

– Tanya-san, can I have a moment?

– Again size measuring? Just how many times do you plan to measure?

– Eh, no, I just want to make it so that it perfectly suits you.

– (sigh), You probably just want to touch them, while using that as a pretext.

You just understand it, do you – he thought, while glaring at her red

faced.

While giving out the smile full of energy, Eiji stood behind Tanya's back, and placed the bra on her chest.

Because there were no measuring tools, he had to set a benchmark by himself and make small adjustments.

Eiji, who was a perfectionist with worker traits, repeated the measurement many times.

– Heh? Didn't your chest grow again...?

– That's because there's someone who can't content himself with touching.

– That's because it's you Tanya-san.

– Naturally! If you dare to do that with any other women, I definitely won't forgive you, right?

Her voice filled with jealousy was pleasant for Eiji's ears.

While being distracted with talk, Eiji used this opportunity to knead her chest. Certainly, her volume increased.

The slippery skin sucked into his hands. The ample meat changed its shape as if it was matching Eiji's hands. Once Tanya sensed his them reaching the top of her puffs, she pinched the back of his hands.

However many times they felt each others skin, Eiji liked that unbreakable stiffness in her behavior.

– Please stop doing that in the morning.

– But, during night you're fine with that, ain't you?

– I don't know...The size measuring is probably over, so let them go.

Hanging her head in shame, certainly, Tanya didn't want their eyes to meet.

Her ears turned red and were burning hot. Tanya's white nape stood out from her loosely untied hair, where a kiss mark could be seen on it. Was it due to Eiji sucking on it thoroughly last night?

That's bad – he thought, as he felt the urge to push her down.

However, he learned a lesson from his previous experience; otherwise, it would turn into quite the troublesome thing later.

Once he made Tanya really upset, while being look with scorching eyes, her mood wouldn't improve for a whole day.

Her cold look could make one feels heartbroken.

So as to avoid any conflict, Eiji took back his hands as requested. Tanya gave out a deep sigh.

As she distanced herself, she faced toward the shelves, and took out something.

- What's that?
- It's a fur tunic. Recently, it's become cool, so won't you feel cold?
- Thank you. I'll value it. Well, here's your return gift.

After Eiji quickly adjusted the hook, he handed it to Tanya.

- Oh my, wasn't this supposed to be unfinished?
- I only had to adjust the hook, so it was about to be done.
- Does that mean the previous size measurement was unnecessary?
- No, it was vital. Because it was the last adjustment, it was really vital.

Eiji wore the tunic, passing his arms through the sleeves.

Was it because it was tanned with deer fur? He could immediately sense warmth wrapping around him.

And also, was it because she sewed it carefully? It didn't feel tight on Eiji's top shoulders when he was moving.

Tanya watched over his posture gladly.

- Tanya-san, you too, please wear that brassiere.
- Then please turn around.
- Eh...It's bad for me to watch?
- Naturally.

Eiji couldn't help but to turn his back. As he did so, the sound of clothes rubbing could be heard.

No matter how many times he saw her body, he couldn't be content.

- It's done.
- Yes, as expected, it looks pretty.

Without having the chance to peek, Tanya finished changing.

Her big chest, which was supported, drew beautiful round spheres more than anything.

Her limbs were sunburnt, but the skin hidden under her clothes was white.

The red dyed brassiere was perfectly suited to her healthy limbs packed with chest mass, which looked as if they were about to burst.

Having a pretty wife was indeed a blessing.

Standing in front of the keenly watching Eiji, Tanya moved down her clothes previously pulled up.

– Yes, that’s enough.

-Too fast! Where’s the extra time?

– Please do your best while working.

– Ah, wait a moment. Don’t push me out like this.

– I think a hardworking man would be dreamy.

– Even if you say so... I can’t help but to start working.

In the end, Eiji, being forced out, left to do his job.

As always, Eiji swung using his metal hammer.

Sometimes he would help with field work, the other time- making soap using the disposed ash; however, what mostly made his heart at peace was processing iron.

While carrying out his smithing work, he would often interrupt Pietro, and teach him his art.

If one were to let their apprentice do the simple task, then letting them do a harder task, such as striking with hammer, would also count.

Cutting the crimson-burning metal sheet thinly, and turning it into the shape for the further striking proceeding, then placing it on the iron anvil.

Once the round pillar was made, Eiji turned over its tip and tapered it to a point. After shaving it further, a nail fastener was made.

Eiji repeated this procedure ten times.

Because the item which he was making was small, there was no need to use the water-powered hammer.

It seemed that thanks to numerous repetitions of his work, Eiji became able to grasp the most suitable amount of carbon which

should be allotted.

And the iron with a much higher viscosity than before was made.

– Master, we have a guest.

-U-understood. Once I finish this job, I'll see him right away, so please make him wait a little bit longer.

– Got that. Sir, please sit here and wait until master comes.

Pietro prepared a smoothly curved chair made of iron.

Its role was to display values which would make guests understanding of iron-made items' quality.

What's more there was no way for Eiji to let a guest enter inside the workshop.

Even though Eiji's passed his skills to his disciple without any stint, it was only natural for him to treasure his manufacturing methods by never taking them off the premises.

Presuming that it was the right time to stop, Eiji moved toward the door opening, only to meet a man wearing fur clothes from top to bottom, sitting on a chair.

The man appeared to be in his prime, and had mild eyes.

Since Eiji couldn't recognize him, he was probably someone from a neighboring village.

Recently, it became routine for Eiji to receive guests with trading intentions from neighboring villages.

Eiji didn't know when the rumor of iron spread, but his first order was a hatchet.

At first, Eiji refused to do so, but as expected, he couldn't continue to keep everything to himself.

It was also essential to maintain interactions between different villages. Because of that, even though it was only a slight amount, Eiji began to trade with his goods.

He didn't make farming tools, as they required lots of consumption; nevertheless, he could receive making kitchen knives, pots, knives, and hatchets as an order.

It wasn't due to high prices that few of his tools were bought, but usually, Eiji would receive 2-3 orders each time.

Since iron tools were resistant and sharp, these alone were worth the money.

- Welcome. Sorry for making you wait.
- It's incredibly hot, isn't it?
- Everyone who comes here for the first time thinks so too.
- Nice to meet you, I'm the tribal chief of Tal village, Girolamo.
- Oh, to think that I'd meet the tribal chief in person.

Tal Village was located below the riverside, and it takes a whole day to reach it from where Eiji lived.

The population of this village was a little more than 100. It's production centered around earthenware, many of which were used as tableware in Eiji's household.

There were no other industries beside this one, nor blacksmiths.

Therefore, it was like a blessing for Girolamo to have one nearby.

Of course he could always supply his lacks by making a request to a peddler, or trading with other villages; however, the further the distance, the higher the cost.

Metal goods were high-grade goods.

- Well then, I'd like to have some farming tools made...
- I intend to sell them, once I manage to improve their resistance properties.
- So, in other words, you won't sell me half-done tools, is that right?
- That would only make my labor harder if I were to repair them, so pardon me.

Eiji wanted to answer this request, if only he could.

Nevertheless, his tools weren't resistant enough for use in hard conditions.

As long as the good doesn't display its right value, one shouldn't consider them for sale – such was Eiji's view.

As he bowed down his head feeling sorry, Girolamo waved his hand side to side.

- No, in that case, it's fine. Still, can I have you make me a metal hammer, fasteners, a hatchet, and arrowheads?
- I can prepare a metal hammer, fasteners and arrowheads for you, but I need you to choose a hatchet.
- Choose?

Girolamo made a face which seemed to indicate he didn't understand.

- Despite saying hatchet, They can vary depending on whether they are used for lumbering or log cutting, as well as whether they're single-edged or double-edged.
- Oh, I see. If it's for lumberjack to use, I wonder if the double-edged will be fine.
- So be it. Certainly, I think it's best to pick the right tool for the job, and in case of a lumberjack, attaching the hilt would be the right thing. When do you need it?
- I plan to lodge here for today and depart tomorrow.
- In that case, I'll probably make it in time if I start now. Please come here tomorrow morning.

The negotiations talk ended.

As soon as Girolamo returned back, Eiji proceeded quickly to its making.

Double-edged tools, just like single-edged, do not require making a curve.

Eiji had to focus on making it straight, so that the blade would plunge into wood, and the wooden handle wouldn't slip out, in order to make goods which would yield a result surpassing their buyers' expectations.

The better evaluation they receive, the more customers will come.

Like this, the iron manufactured goods became recognized being from this village, little by little, even though this wasn't Eiji's primary intention.

Chapter 17 – The Trade

It has been a long time since Eiji last met with Tanya's Grandmother, the tribal chief.

They would usually happen to see each other during the soap trade and exchange, but these were just some greetings.

From the time he learned about her true relation with Tanya, Eiji became more timid. This, perhaps, could be the reason for him feeling the distance between Bona and himself.

Still, it was far better than getting along with total strangers, who were only business-oriented.

- Oh, Eiji, so you came.
- Yes, grandmother. Do you have any business with me?
- Well, first, let's drink some tea.

Eiji gave in and sat on the chair as the tribal chief suggested.

There was a teacup with steaming water placed on the table.

It seemed to be a herbal tea brewed using fruit similar to the common linden, or some similar tree.

Once he began to drink, Eiji could sense the delicate fragrance of flowers.

- I like to drink it using the honey from the linden tree's flowers, you know. This tea was also made using flowers from the same tree. I have the feeling like its whole life is poured into it.
- Recently, it has become cool, so drinking this tea tastes really good.
- Is that so? That girl, she also likes this, you know. So bring her some back.

Bona handed a jar full of dried fruits and another with small dose of honey.

These were all squeezed by the tribal chief herself.

When Eiji received them gratefully, he smiled gently without realizing it as he imagined Tanya's happy face.

- Has it been already half year since you came? Looks like you still

have trouble with managing people. Do your best.

– There's no way for me to watch them all the time, so it's hard.

– You still have your own job to do, I see. It's fine to ask Tanya if there's anything you need. That girl has always been watching my back since she was a little kid, and so, she grew up like that. She knows how to deal with most problems.

– Is that so? It doesn't seem like that to me.

– That's because she gives them up to you, who is her husband.

Certainly, the Tanya in Eiji's memory seemed to always respect him.

She neither has complaints, nor criticism for what he does.

What's more, whenever she was told about a new invention, Tanya would comply with Eiji, who said "leave it to me", and even let him test the soap on her.

Still, she would perhaps hesitate every time she was helping Eiji with his new creations.

Eiji was as well allowed to do business with peddlers without the need of having Tanya follow him around.

He was thankful to have such an understanding wife who respected him in every aspect.

– Did you fall in love with her again?

– In the first place, my love for her is infinite, so it doesn't change.

– You're just boasting about her.

A wry smile appeared on tribal chief's face.

– To begin with, the first guy that died came from a distant village, and was the second son of the tribal chief there. Because I wanted him to leave an offspring, there was a need to make both of them get along. I also thought of entrusting him this village someday, so I taught Tanya lots of things.

– So it was like that.

– If I were to describe that girl, she would always listen to other villagers, and if there was something I needed, we would often talk about it.

– Does it concern things like your health?

Eiji felt startled after hearing "if there was something I needed".

The tribal chief was around her 50s.

Her hair became white, and her back had shrunk due to many years of hard work.

It wouldn't be strange if her life were to end in this cruel environment, where one had to deal with food insufficient and everyday manual labor.

Furthermore, the level of medicine was low.

If one were to decline in strength, there would be no cure.

Even catching a cold would result in one's death.

However, her face didn't look pale, and there was a pitch in her voice.

There was no need to worry about how her health would turn out.

– I'm still alive and kicking, you see. Probably, I won't be substituted immediately, but there's nothing better than remembering about your job and becoming an adult.

– That's also true.

– That's why, whenever you have time, use it wisely. Keep relentlessly forging. And also, negotiate with those damned landlords, trade with peddlers, and make contacts with other villages. There seems to be lots to do.

– Please don't be hard on me.

– No, I'll make you into a fine hard-working man.

Kuhahaa – in contrast to the tribal chief who laughed, Eiji could only make a wry smile.

Saying things, like making her granddaughter's husband into a fine man that would fulfill his duty, gave Eiji, who had neither connections nor origin, lots of security.

Despite knowing that, he still had hard times dealing with this person.

The tribal chief of Siena was indeed an eccentric person, possessing both gentleness and strictness.

A quite chilly wind blew.

Above one's head, the blue sky and cumulonimbus clouds expanded.

Small clouds, which seemed to be countless, reminded of the fall. The sun was pouring from the clouds' gaps, soothing the fall cold.

Together with the sound of rattling, Eiji could feel the slight shaking under his bottom.

The shaking was due to the wheels of the carriage bumping on the small stones and hollows, which were created in the road.

Quite a long time before, Eiji attached springs to the wheelbarrow.

The wheelbarrow, which was entrusted to and made by Fernando, proved to be highly flexible in use. However, because it was shaking, Eiji thought of making springs, which also were later attached to the carriage specially made for trading purposes.

Cutting iron wire, then bending it so that it achieves the proper angle. This labor required lots of skills, and therefore, it wasn't easy to maintain the right elasticity.

Nevertheless, this difficulty was one of a craftsman's charms.

Later they could be turned into wheel's shaft and bearings

Because of that, the friction and the resistance of wheels were greatly reduced.

The carriage was now heading toward Tal village from Siena.

– The weather is good isn't it, Eiji-san?

– True. Tanya-san don't you feel chilly?

– It's fine. I can feel warmth coming from Eiji-san.

In front of the load, both of them placed together their shoulders with a big blanket on top, covering them. Certainly, Eiji could feel the warmth wrapping around him from their bodies. And not only his body, but also his heart could sense it coming from the person he loved.

– Ack! Going out together with newlyweds, this feeling is the worst...

Fernando, who was in the carriage seat, was driving the cart while using some abusive language.

Once Eiji told the tribal chief that he had never been outside of the village, he was entrusted with the job of doing trade business.

Because Eiji didn't know how the interchange would normally work, Fernando, who was quite an eloquent negotiator, was assigned as the representative.

It also seemed that Fernando often used to be in charge of negotiations.

– Oh dear, please give us a break. We haven't even had a chance to go outside together.

– That's right.

– Yeah, yeah. Please pay attention so that the load doesn't break.

However many suspensions they attach, there was no way of completely nullifying the shake.

Again, there was a deep forest between both villages, which seemed to go on forever, and the path's width was narrow.

As there were other trade and peddler carriages regularly passing through, the big stones were removed; nevertheless, there were lots of bumps still remaining.

The load included fur and fur-made goods. In addition to that, sheep wool and cheese were packed. Since there are small hills in Siena, apart from farming, raising livestock was as well possible. Besides that, it had herbs naturally growing in the mountain, such as mint and lemon grass, well known to Eiji. Then, there were small quantities of iron-made goods, such as metal nails, needles, scissors, kitchen knives, and pots.

-What will we get in exchange for these?

– In this time of year, the most essential thing would be salt.

– So it's salt? It would seem that there are no places with rock salt in the village. Are we buying it just for cooking?

– It's not just for cooking. During this time, we need great amount of salt to make preserved foods, such as dried meat, ham, sausages, and salt pickled fish.

– Oh, so there were actually preserved foods?

– That's right. Even in the winter we can somehow manage to catch fishes, but in case of hunting, it would more difficult.

– Mike-san is quite skillful in shooting migratory birds, still...

For Eiji, it was the first winter.

He couldn't imagine how difficult it must be, but judging from their manner of talking, it seemed to be quite harsh – is what he predicted.

- If there's anything you need, just say it.
- Understood.

Just what kind of village will it be, and will there be any difference? It was said to be specializing in producing earthenware, but salt used for exchange was probably the good coming from other villages' influx.

Eiji wondered if there was anything that could become useful for the village, as well as, whether or not there was something which he could give to Tanya as a present.

Furthermore, is their life different? And what kind of feeling would it give, in comparison with Siena?

Seeing a different village that was in front of him, for the first time made his heart beat faster.

Chapter 18 – The Trade With Tal Village

Since when did I fall asleep – wondered Eiji once he woke up only to find himself lying down.

In front of him, the sky began to dye red as the day was reaching evening.

Having ate some lunch, the three of them, including Tanya and Fernando, enjoyed a conversation.

Because the scenery during the travel wasn't changing for better, Eiji decided to take a small break. After that, his memory became unclear.

On the back of the chair, on which furs were piling up, sat Tanya who was sleeping.

Normally, she would wake up earlier than Eiji, so this was a rare occasion for him to be able to watch her sleeping face.

The more he watched, the more he realized how pretty she looks, to the extent that he believed it was such a waste.

– Oh, so you woke up? Just in time. We're about to reach Tal Village.

– Sorry for troubling you.

– What? You were probably just tired because of not being used to travel.

Even though he said that they were about to reach the village, that wasn't quite what he meant. Rather, it was the outskirts of the village.

They could see a single private house together with the surrounding fields standing alone.

– Is that a household?

The rooftop was straw-thatched and its walls were made using mud, which was an unusually simplistic construction.

In comparison with the wood-made buildings in Siena, these seemed to be far more inferior in terms of technology. It was probably due to the low number of carpenters.

As their cart kept advancing, the answer became clear.

The center of the village was much more complete, in comparison with its outskirts, and was built just like in Siena, using wood.

When they reached the tribal chief's remarkable house, Girolamo was already standing there. Was it because he was awaiting some guests?

As always his face looked elegant.

– Welcome, Fer, as well as the villagers of Siena. And you're, if I remember well, the blacksmith... wasn't it Eiji-san?

– Hi, long time no see.

– And then, this pretty lady is...?

– Thank you for your flattery. I'm Eiji's wife, Tanya.

– Nice to meet you. I'm the tribal chief of Tal village, Girolamo. Please treat me well.

Girolamo bowed down politely toward Eiji and Tanya, but in case of Fernando, the greeting looked like to be a handshake.

Putting them together, Girolamo was quite older than Fernando, but they seemed to understand each other.

– This time, will it be exchanging goods? Same as usual?

– Basically, yes. This year, since Eiji came to this village, the number of necessities seems to have increase a little. From me, I'll add the fasteners which you asked for.

– That's truly a blessing. Eiji-kun, is there anything you need?

– I think it would be oil. I need quite the amount of them to prevent the friction in iron-made goods. Do you have any?

– Yes, I do. Despite saying so, I don't have much in stock, but I've got olive, rapeseed, and canola oil. I wonder which one you'd like.

– Can I have the canola oil? Also, some of the olive oil as well.

– If you want to have a large amount of them, then I guess it would be better to make them in your village.

– I'll consider that.

In Siena village, most of land consisted of terraced fields. Because

of that, the field productivity wasn't good.

The wheat crops could be harvested 2-3 times; therefore, besides unhulled wheat grains, there was no surplus left. That would mean easily falling into food shortage.

There were no redundant workers, so assigning them to a new job would probably be out of the question.

There was a strong chance that Pietro, who was tagging along, would prevent the loss of technology once he reaches the same age as Eiji.

Increasing the number of plows, introducing the crop rotation which will improve production, as well as increasing the number of livestock and population, these, Eiji could do nothing but aim for. However, they were not things that could be done within 1 or 2 years.

After that, he intended to increase the power of the water mill, which would greatly reduce labor time of villagers. As Eiji was quietly collecting ideas, he realized that he had become some sort of statesman.

Unexpectedly, helping the tribal chief with her labor didn't seem to be bad, given that Eiji wouldn't be making a living from smithing.

- What's the matter Eiji? You look like you're in daze.
- Ah, pardon me. I was just a little bit immersed in thinking.
- My husband is sometimes sunk in his thoughts. Please forgive him.
- No, I don't mind particularly, but I wonder if I've got something to do later.
- Sorry. Then, we would like to have some...10 small jars, please.
- I shall prepare them for you by tomorrow when you depart.

Once they finished placing orders on trading goods, they were invited to

Girolamo's house.

There was a guest room with 1 big bed furnished.

It seems like in this village, the majority of houses were the same.

In addition to that, there was a large oblong chest with upper lid and bronze-made lock, in which one could store their luggage.

- This is the key to the room. Please keep it until tomorrow.
- Understood.

After they were guided to the room, they went to eat.
Because they arrived late, the evening dinner had lights lit up.
Eiji and the rest felt sorry for forcing the unnecessary cost.

An unusually long table was seen, to which two long chairs were interposed.

On one side was Girolamo's family, on the opposite, Siena's villagers.

Girolamo's household was a large one with 5 children, with the oldest being around 25, and the youngest, probably not even 10.

On the table, there was a menu prepared for guest occasions.

There were foods lined up, such as ham, food preserved sausage, cheese, wild oat porridge, as well as bean soup. The ham was roasted and the sausage boiled.

One could see western seasonings accompanying the meal, like brown mustard, parsley, and pepper mint.

In addition, there were 2 types of cheese prepared. One of which was made from cow milk and the other being from a goat. The latter one gave off a strong smell.

Because all of them had rich tastes, they first started with the porridge.

The drink was wine.

Even though saying it's wine, this one wasn't a grape one, but instead, a cider made from fermented apples.

While savoring the food, they started a conversation, which first began with a social topic, then changed to Eiji's origin, with the next one being about taxes.

They could also learn about Girolamo doing various things, so as to improve, even a little, this village's administration methods.

– I see. There were such methods of field cultivation? So just sowing seeds isn't enough, isn't it? Certainly, I'd like to have you show me that in practice.

– Once the stones are removed, we can do seed sowing straight away. Nevertheless, there's still not enough plows in our village, so doing that immediately won't be possible.

– I'm really looking forward to harvesting in the spring.

- Yes, as long the surface of the fields are the same, the amount of harvest will increase, which will allow you to have quite a lot in stock.
- However, the tax is abnormally high....

Girolamo, who had a troubled expression, muttered a complaint. As he suddenly leaned the cup, he poured the Cider.

- Is it that heavy?
- Eiji-san, don't you know? Our village suffered the most damage as the result of the war. In addition to that, we have to do lots of forced service, and even despite having numerous earthenware goods, it doesn't guarantee us having children.

The forced service is in other words their obligation duty^[1].

It was imposed in a form of different works, such as repairing routes, repairing landlord previous house building, or other similar repairs.

Besides having their hands occupied 2 days per week, there was a need to collect a great amount of tax imposed on the earthenware, which was their main trading product.

It seems that apart from Girolamo, people have fewer children in Tal village.

And due to the short life span, low amounts of medicine, and poor public sanitation, this village is at risk of extinction, with its people being unable to reproduce.

Presently, thanks to introducing iron pots and kitchen knives, their cooking time has reduced significantly, allowing them to have more time to spent on production. This fact made people here pleased.

- Eiji-san, you too should wary of tax collectors. Aside from being awfully greedy, once they notice something within their interest, they will try to completely narrow it down. If they realize the charm of iron, you will be in real trouble.
- Is that so?
- They are heartless people. There was a guy named Franko, who came just the other day. He will probably head toward Siena, since it's nearby.

While having a little bit of a red face, Girolamo warned Eiji with a

stern face.

Notes

1. In other words, they have to pay taxes in form of additional labor.

Chapter 19 – The Return of the Storm

Having spent the night in Tal village, the morning came.

Once they woke up, Eiji and everyone went to pack their trading goods in the carriage.

The goods which they acquired through trading were as follow:

- 300 kilos of salt
- 20 earthenware jars of different sizes
- 10 kilos of each type of plant oil
- 10 kilos of raw cotton
- Spices, such as: saffron, thyme, celery, basil, and dill.

– That’s an incredible amount.

– We have to pack as much as possible on every single occasion, otherwise it won’t do. It’s not like we can come here every day.

– Isn’t it because of me tagging along that the amount of goods is lesser?

– No, that is...! Being able to go out from the village is essential as well. Especially since you don’t know of anything, this will become a good example.

– Fernando-san... so you thought about me that way, didn’t you?

– You’re loud. To think that you would tease a senior. If you make me angry, you better remember.

Apparently, in addition to sausages and ham, a great number of spices are needed.

Besides them, small items, like dyes, shells, fruits, and weeds, were as well gathered.

Among the traded goods, it seemed that not all of them were supposed to be put for use at Siena village. Some of them were intended for further exchange with other villages.

After finishing their breakfast, it was necessary to depart early, however, Eiji wished to see and study the earthenware workshop a little bit.

-
- So you make them here, don't you?
 - It's a tight place, and there's little to be seen, but...
 - No, that's enough.

It was a small and tight room, which was merely 2 tatami mat sized. It had a straw-thatched roof and a minimum number of pillars and beams diagonally arranged. All of them were lined.

Inside, a potter's wheel furnished the room. Sitting in front of it was a girl, who was about to make a jar.

This was a sight which didn't vary much from what Eiji knew in his modern world.

Whatever era it might be, it seemed that the traditional handcraft wouldn't change its true nature.

The potter's wheel kept revolving and the lump of earth kept changing its shape.

If one were to watch it, it would look rather simple; however, in practice it was hard to draw a perfect circle while applying one's hands to it.

Were it not for daily repetition of the same work and improving the dexterity by gaining experience, it wouldn't be possible to make a good item.

Once the form is made, it's dried in the sunshine, and then tempered the following day.

The stove too, looked big and splendid.

It was probably used numerous times, as you could see where numerous cracks had been mended everywhere on it.

- From here you make jars and plates, right?
- That's right. We make different types of them, such as bisque porcelain and earthenware covered with ceramic glaze.

Apart from Girolamo, Tanya was accompanying as well.

For Eiji, it wasn't just observing and studying due to one's deep curiosity, but also moving around implements and tools which, he heard, were desired by villagers.

– Thank you very much. It was a short time, but seems like it will become a valuable memory.

– Having you pleased is of utmost importance.

It was indeed a short amount of time; nevertheless, being able to catch a glimpse of village life was considered a precious time by Eiji.

Since Siena had a higher population in comparison with Tal village, its people didn't have to slave away at their labor.

Eiji could notice different things which he normally wouldn't due to his smithing works, such as high taxes and harsh compulsory service.

After that, there was one more question which arose – the reason why the war had occurred. Asking about that to Fernando or Tanya should be fine.

As they finished checking the load on the carriage again, they boarded it.

Fernando was in charge of driving the carriage during the return journey as well.

– Thank you for taking care of us.

– Please visit us once again, someday. However, this time, I'd hope to see the plow.

– I will. In addition, I will prepare as many hoes and scythes as possible.

– Yes please. We are deeply grateful for the iron pots and kitchen knives you brought us.

– Well then, see you Girolamo.

– Please take care, Fer.

The sight of their parting looked like that of buddies.

They struck their fists together, and with that, they left no regrets behind.

As the carriage began to move, the small sound of creaking could be heard.

Looking behind, Girolamo was seeing them off, like he was forever doing it.

During their back trip, no one was sleeping.

- But, I wonder what the reason for taxes being that high is.
- What do you mean?
- You said that even the biggest city, where the noble resided, has about a little more than 400 in population, didn't you?^[1]
- Yea, that's right.
- However, it doesn't seem like they have the power to gather that much in regards to food supply and materials...
- Ah, that's because...
- It's because the city of Nazioni prospers in smithing.
- Nazioni?

As Tanya answered to his question while interfering, Fernando made a bitter face.

Tanya nodded back at Eiji who parroted her words.

- The Nazioni, which was mentioned in the talk, has more than 2 blacksmiths. Not just life necessities but also making weapons is the reason for their overwhelming power.
- I see.
- Speaking of which, until recently the tax wasn't that high. It happened after the end of the war.

Even in this aspect, the war is mentioned – thought Eiji.

Tanya's previous husband died as well in the same circumstances.

Tal village sustained the most damage. On top of that, it was exacted with high taxes.

Just what an earth—

- What sort of a war was it?

Without thinking ahead, Eiji leant forward.

He realized that he made a mistake when Tanya's face turned gloomy.

– I'm not sure what the reason behind the war was, however, one day, under the pretext of being the villages of this land, the island was divided into two forces of west and east sides. Siena and Tal were the closest to the west side among all the villages; therefore it was natural for us to be plot on the west side. Our village didn't have anything which could be considered weapon-wise, so we began fighting using bows, forks, nata and hatchets.

For the sake of protecting their village, there were probably people, who had the courage to face even a bear, willing to stand up to the same human being and killing each other.

– The entire number of people who gathered was 300. I think the majority of the men mobilized. They shot using bows, swung with their tools, and died on the spot. There was a mountain of dead people. I was lucky to avoid any injury. Once we noticed the ringleader of the east side, who was at the same time the perpetrator of that war, died in the battle, the war ended. This isn't the kind of memory that I'd like to experience a second time.

– Lots of people who returned died as a result of falling into illness.

As they had no special protectors, even a little injury could be life threatening.

Due to the low level of medicine, as well as bad sanitation, those who would fell into diseases, such as tetanus, would be lost.

There's no doubt that the island's population would drastically reduce.

– Since then, the man in charge of command gained more power of speech, making the management become severe. He justified this under the pretext of promoting the revival of each village, as well as preventing any rebellion.

– So the reason why Girolamo-san was so angry was because of that, isn't it?

– Yeah, out of the 10 people Tal village sent, none returned alive. As for our village, starting from Tanya's ex-husband, three people died, whereas, 4 people became unable to use either their hands or legs. If they really intended to revive the villages, I wish they had started with reducing the tax.

– I understand well. Thank you very much.

It seemed like Fernando was quite unsatisfied.

His nasal breathing became irregular, but as his gaze seemed to be running far away, Fernando's expression changed.

– There are clouds gathering above the Lion Mountain. If we don't return quickly, it will start raining once it's evening.

– You can understand it?

– Yes, the clouds gathering above the mountain which I'm pointing at, they always begin to rain once it's evening. We have load and there's no way we can let them get soaked.

They placed the fur on the carriage.

Fastening the hemp rope, they adjusted the position, so that the salt, oil, and spices wouldn't get damp.

Finally, just as Fernando predicted, the sky turned dim and black clouds started to appear.

– It's about to rain!

– Tanya-san, please sit here, so as not to get soaked.

– What about Eiji-san?

– I'll be perfectly fine.

– Hey, give it to me too!

– Understood.

The deer fur expanded thinly and nicely.

As they placed it on their head, just like kantoui^[2], the rain started to fall.

Once they noticed the rain drops descending, it became your usual rainfall.

The autumn rain was cold.

Were it not for the fur's water repelling properties, they would have probably been soaked to the bone.

The cattle were pulling the cart eagerly through the path which began to turn muddy.

– It's becoming stronger and stronger. As long as there's no thunder, it should be fine, but...

Their view worsened because of large droplets.

There was no time to pay attention whether or not it was their familiar surroundings.

– We have reached the village! First, we will unload the cargo at the tribal chief's house.

– Once it's done, I want to take a bath.

– Before that, let's prepare some hot water for drinking.

No matter how they would wear the fur, it couldn't completely deflect the rain water.

Their bodies were wet, which took away their temperature.

As they arrived in front of tribal chief's house, they opened the barn and immediately entered inside.

Eiji took out the fur from the carriage, and while he was repelling the muddy water, he proceeded to move the goods.

The jars filled with salt and oil were unusually heavy. Not being affected by it, Eiji exhaled breath with white vapor mixed in.

Tanya went ahead to inform her grandmother about their arrival, as well as to prepare hot water.

gigi – the creaking sound of the opening gate door was heard.

However, the silhouette which came in sight was contrary to their expectations.

It was a tall man.

His slim face was remarkably prominent. As his sharp eyes fixed their position on Tanya, they quickly switched toward Eiji's direction.

– You're....

The man's challenging voice echoed sharply, making everyone forget the sound of the rain.

– You're the man called Eiji, aren't you?

Notes

1. I'm not sure whether or not this sort of info was told before by that peddler. Nevertheless, the peddler's name didn't appear and it sounded weird if it was Eiji to actually say it, so the only remaining one was Fernando. I assume he

told him by some chance before the peddler did.

2. a simple type of clothing consisting of a large piece of cloth with a hole in the middle for the head (quoted from jisho.org)

Chapter 20 – The Start of the Negotiation

The atmosphere was filled with heavy silence.

On the one side of the table sat Eiji and the tribal chief, whereas, on the opposite was the man.

The sound of the firewood bursting into flame reverberated together with the sound of the continuously falling rain.

Inside the dim-lighted room, there was a stove and a torch for light.

After changing his clothes and warming up for a while, Eiji looked at the man attentively.

– My name is Franko. My job involves territory managing and tax collection.

– It's Eiji, I do forging.

Somehow, being fixedly glared at by this guy gives off a bad feeling.

But Franko wouldn't avert his eyes.

Being observed by that guy's eyes, which seemed to see through to one's soul, Eiji could feel the difficulty in dealing with him.

Never before had he been gazed at like this.

Eiji could feel pressure coming.

Next to him, while the tribal chief was sipping hot water, she sent Franko an eye signal, so as to begin the conversation.

– I have several questions to ask you; therefore I'd like to have you answer me. It's true that you're making use of the iron which hasn't been use until now, yes?

– That's true.

– So you're telling me that the metal, which has been infamously called 'the garbage metal', became useful?

– It seems so.

– I wonder what forced you to think of it that way.

– I don't know.

– You don't know?

Eiji spoke about his personal history.

Not only about how he lost his memory, but also about his knowledge remaining.

He told him how he was picked by Tanya, and how he strived in order to become a member of this village.

As well as that he possessed arts, information, and experience of a blacksmith.

Eiji thought that it would be only natural for him to apply iron in the present time where only bronze was used.

While listening to Eiji's answer, Franko nodded with sounds indicating that he understood.

Then, he spat out words at once saying – I see, I got it.

– Then let's follow your story. It seems that this iron has a fine sharpness, but quickly it becomes rusty, as well as not being too durable, don't you think?

– It went well with kitchen knives and hatchets; however, as for hoes and scythes, I still have to improve.

– Are the prospects of improving methods visible?

– It's still at the stage of experimentation, or something of this sort.

Eiji didn't intend to answer in detail; nevertheless, he didn't consider himself to be a skillful liar ^[1]

Talking would be the same as digging one's own grave.

He thought that it would be better to answer with the necessary minimum, just to the extent of not ignoring that person.

Franko continued to speak without holding any bad feelings toward Eiji, and dropped words which gave an impact.

– I see. But doesn't it seem like you've been making great efforts with other things? Judging from what I checked, in addition to goods, such as: hammer, iron pot, kitchen knives, needles, and fasteners, there seem to be other tools like: upgraded plows and hoes, bearings and axles used in bullock carts, a tree cutting tool called a saw, a tool used to shave the tree – a plane, a seed sowing implement, tools which use the power of the so-called water mill, a trap used for hunting animals, a human powered cart, ofuro, and soap.... All of these are correct, right?

This man...!

Because of the shock, Eiji couldn't answer straight away.

- Yes...
- You surely have checked quite thoroughly, haven't you?
- At first, when I asked the villagers, they were rather reluctant, but once I requested them to tell me with honesty, I was able to draw comfortable answers.

It would be fine to consider all of these items as exposed due to making them available to the public.

The implements which hadn't been noticed by him were things, like the senbago used by Tanya and the winnower.

There's a chance that he will even grasp those.

How long had it been since Franko arrived?

Eiji felt chills running up his spine, thinking about his fearsome information gathering ability.

Then, that word called "honesty."

He probably must have had some sort of method to get the information out the people.

Eiji could easily imagine the content of Franko's job.

Perhaps, it reeks of him trying to intimidate with raising or exacting taxes – he thought.

Indeed, an incredibly capable person.

Most likely, he would be able to see through one's lies and deception within a blink of time.

Eiji could sense his mouth rattling and drying.

Even though he tried to drink the tea, his mucous membranes felt numb.

And while being aware that his expression became tense, he couldn't stop it.

– It's fine not to be that stiff. I'm not saying anything that would mean taking away from you, or devour from you.

– You say? But, it seems to be so because you're the tax collector. Having to face a person who's an official, I can't help but feel nervous. What's more you look quite capable.

– Is that so...? Well, I thought you'd say that. It can't be helped.

Saying that, Franko smiled lonesomely.

That sight was unexpected to Eiji, which made him think like "Oh?"

Eiji believed that this guy actually understood his duty well.

Furthermore, he was aware of the fact that being an official was a role disliked by others.

And more than that, he tends to work thoroughly.

That appearance of his piled up with Eiji's, who worked as a blacksmith.

Despite that, Eiji could make other people happy only with his work.

On the other hand, for Franko to do his best, it was enough to please specific people, and to throw someone into misfortune.

Certainly, there was no way for the side which takes and for the side which had things taken to be compatible, so he didn't appear to be a likeable character. Nevertheless, you had to admit he possessed way of working and abilities.

– Then, let's ascertain your discharge of duty. Including the previously mentioned developments, Eiji-san managed to produce 50 points within 3 months of time. Not to mention, during that time, once the charcoal ran out, he had to interrupt his work in order to gather lumber. Indeed, that's some fearsome mobilization power.

– I sometimes had different people assist me, or entrusted them with everything, from time to time.

– Despite that, the majority of the works were yours. If we simply 4-fold that, your production ability would reach 200 points per year.

At that time, Franko cut his words short.

Then, within a moment he looked straight at Eiji.

One could feel the strong attitude coming from him, which said 'I'll not allow any place for excuses.'

– ...I'd like you to achieve 100 out of these 200 points.

– That's harsh, isn't it? At this rate we won't be able to burn using our stoves during the winter.

– Oh. Why is that?

– It's because other people use firewood as well.

During the winter, no matter which household it is, each needs to kindle fire in order to get warmth.

If so, then Felipe's job will be at the limit due to the amount of work.

Back in the olden days, blacksmiths used to store firewood when it became winter, and used them for the work once it turned warm.

– I see. In that case, I'll reduce the amount concerning the winter season and make it 80 points. However, in exchange, I want you to make soap. How about this?

– I see....

Indeed, after seeing such a situation, he would compromise.

Because it seemed that the wheat tax ratio was 50:50 between the officials and peasants, one could have the feeling that half of the yearly production would be reasonable.

Nevertheless, there was some sort of trick.

Judging from Eiji's feeling, if he were to consider them as trade products, the value of iron tools would be comparatively high in comparison with wheat.

Wouldn't that mean higher taxes?

For Eiji, in order to make everything more luxurious, he couldn't care whether the taxes were high or low.

But, if the taxes are low, then the village would develop thanks to flow of trade products through and throughout the village.

He wanted to make the life of the people around him more abundant. Having only half of the tax collected while doing the same work would be considered a blessing.

That wasn't the sole reason for his worry, however.

Could it be that the reason why Franko wasn't coercive in his negotiations was because he wasn't able to measure the exact value of Eiji's inventions?

Perhaps, with such reason, it would be possible to reduce the tax ratio – he thought.

In spite of that, what should you do to make it good?

And can they fight for equal opportunities?

While Eiji couldn't think of any ideas, the hand of a savior was outstretched.

That was tribal chief who was sitting next to him silently without giving off any sign.

– Franko, I have a small suggestion coming from me, however...

Notes

1. the meaning was 'skilfull speaker' in Japanese, but somehow 'skilfull liar', which was suggested by Ace, matched better. I can't tell whether it is what the author meant, but just bear it in your mind.

Chapter 21 – The Conclusion of the Negotiation

Franko's mood changed naturally, as the tribal assumed the role of the negotiator.

His overwhelming aura, which could be sensed until now, turned into 'Let's hear it out.'

You could notice the change of attitude in the voices coming from the people who were sitting, as well as those observing.

As Eiji noticed that he was not allowed to leave the table, he felt disappointed.

However, it wouldn't end with just that.

If there were any lacks in oneself, one should consider filling them up by learning.

When he decided to concentrate, he put his ear toward the negotiation between both of them.

Their negotiation started with a quiet tone coming from the tribal chief, which was more suppressed than usual.

– Franko, I have a little suggestion coming from me, however...

– Let's hear it out.

– Since you've already made an investigation, you should know the best, but this guy is exceptional. He's made a range of new things and has put them to use.

– It seems to be so. Still half of year has passed since he arrived, right?

– That's right. I will ask you, but, do you really think that there is room for making new inventions if we are restrained with heavy taxes?

– If you freeze the number of laborers, you will be able to reduce the burden.

– Eiji is the only one responsible for supplying us with raw materials, production, and processing. At least forward us with your people, so that we can devote ourselves more towards production.

Hearing the tribal chief's words, Franko kept silent.

It was probably the sort of talk which you wouldn't insert in as a condition.

– I shall send you several people if I can have him com—

– Eiji is a member of this village. Do you honestly think I would let you have him? Can't you figure out what will happen to him if I let him go?

What will happen?

It feels as though one couldn't picture that.

For Eiji, who held some doubts about it, the next words coming from the tribal chief's mouth were full of surprise.

The tribal chief shot a look to Eiji, telling him to pay more attention.

– I can imagine him being confined in your city and forced to do labor. You wouldn't have the slightest intention of letting him return to the village, so you would probably just pass a verbal message at your own convenience, and sooner or later use a roundabout way to request Tanya for a divorce. Of course Eiji, they would report that by saying that the request came from you.

– W-wouldn't such thing be actually the first to be exposed with?

– Eiji, you are still young. No, rather I would say that you still don't know your true value.

The tribal chief's face became stunned at Eiji, who was trying to deny that it's not possible.

He too understood from looking at her face that she doesn't comprehend him.

This person just says what he thinks. – she thought.

Through the muscles along his spine he felt a chill, which somehow couldn't be expressed in words. Eiji could feel the pores of his skin expanding.

It was fearsome and above all else he was unable to comprehend it. Eiji was filled with emotions of disbelief, saying that his skills couldn't be that valuable.

The tribal chief and Franko's way of reasoning was running contrary to his sense of values.

– If it's this guy, then he's capable of doing so. Of course, he won't do that using brute force, but rather use skillful words in order to create such a situation, in which you won't be able to react. If I were in his shoes, I would do the same. Furthermore, since he has traveled between various villages, he would possess quite a large amount of experience. I intend to make sure of the truth.

– I feel troubled for forcing a talk based on assumptions on you. Eiji, please be at ease. I can assure you that such things won't happen.

– Even if you wanted to, you wouldn't be able. However, if you dare to do so, I shall not remain silent. I wonder whether it will even turn into a war.

– That's why I say it's a delusion unlikely to occur.

Siena village has a population of 250 something. On the other hand, the city of Nazioni, where the feudal reside, has a number which is around a little more than 400 and a dozen.

One could say that it wasn't an overwhelming difference.

The city of Nazioni has been the ruling side thanks to the difference of power in technology based on bronze smithing. Therefore, they would consider Eiji, who is able to handle iron manufacture, a threat. For that reason, they would want to keep someone like Eiji on their side if possible – is what the tribal chief told Eiji.

– Were you to tie him up in such a half-baked way, you would probably not prosper from having all those new items. Rather than that, don't you think it would be much more profitable to let him do as he please in making new items?

– I shall acknowledge that. Nevertheless, there's no real guarantee that he will be able to make those new things.

– Eiji.

– Yes?

– Do you have any other ideas which you could use to make new things?

Eiji knew what kind of answer the tribal chief was expecting.

Furthermore, he knew it would relate to the constraints placed on him depending on what kind of answer he gives.

– Well then, if it's a small thing...The item which comes into my mind

right now is...If it's right now... considering what the village need, wouldn't it be horseshoes?

- Horseshoes? What's that? I'd like you to explain it to me in details.
- They're shoes made from iron used to cover a horse's feet, you see. It protects the horse's hooves, making it harder to sustain injuries.

Wild horses have hard hooves; therefore they won't get simply injured. However, a horse that became domesticated has a meek hoof and are more susceptible to injury.

What's more, they are used for labor, such as plowing and pulling carts, making their hooves easily to wear out as a result.

During their daily activities in Siena, Eiji heard from the farmer, Bernard, who complained about the weak constitution of his horse. It was then that he came across the idea of making horseshoes.

Of course, there's no proof that it will immediately become a good item just because he says that he will make it.

His craftsmanship will vary depending on the shape and the thickness, which might decide whether or not it will be easy to walk.

Nevertheless, it was something that could be amended. If he could achieve such a result using his skills, then it would be fine.

Hearing Eiji's words, the tribal chief regained her senses and nodded deeply.

- Just like this, with little questioning he was able to come out with an idea of making a new object. I think this should be more than enough for proof.

- ...I can't help but to accept that. Eiji-san.

- Yes?

- When you create new items, you don't just make one, do you?

- In order to test them out, I make several patterns.

- Then, please consider them as paying taxes.

- Won't the tax ratio change with that?

- Your burden will reduce. Also, I have to make sure you make up for that excuse, you see.

- Ugh...

- Ah, of course if it's something small that requires very little time to make, I'd like to have a specific amount of them.

Surely, with such a tax structure, he will be definitely able to get hold of new technologies.

At the same time, assuming that Eiji makes more than three items of the same type, there will be a chance to reduce the tax ratio naturally.

Compared with the talk until now, it didn't seem to be half bad idea – he thought.

- There's one more thing.
- Still there's something else you want?
- This is vital as well. Even though you say paying taxes, it's not like paying with anything will do. I want to specify it, for instance, that farmers pay using wheat, shepherds – with cheese and meat, animal dung, and fur.
- I got it....

This is a society which is made up of exchanging goods.

Normally, If there is a monetary system, then paying with money would be considered rather convenient. Nevertheless, it's not always true.

If so, then food, which takes time to grow, would be collected less frequently in a form of taxes, rather than money.

If he intends to impose taxes on special products of every single village, then minimalizing the time of pay between taxes would probably give a relief for villagers.

- Speaking of which, Eiji-san, I want you to pay me, apart from your inventions, with 500 something of arrowheads, as well as, 10 spearheads.
- Be that as it may with arrowheads... but I refuse to make spearheads.
- Why is that?
- I don't want to make tools which intend to take away human lives.
- Nonetheless, tools like nata and hatchets can also be used to kill people? Why is it fine with arrowhead?
- Because it can be applied in villages for hunting. Its main purpose isn't to be used in a war. I understand that it can be made into a weapon, depending on its user. Still, I wish to create items which

solely focus on making the life wealthier.

It was a condition which Eiji couldn't yield in.

Based on the history he knows, there used to be lots of blacksmiths who made their living forging weapons, such as swords, armors, and guns.

Despite that, Eiji's main principle, since his birth and until now, was to forge iron tools while watching people smiling.

That applied to his father, whom he saw in his faint dream, as well.

Eiji looked into Franko's eyes as if expressing his determination.

This time he wouldn't avert his eyes.

– Still, you can use them to maintain the peace?

– Regardless of that, a weapon is a weapon.

The silence continued for a while

Eiji wouldn't change his opinion.

In the worst case, he would have the eyes on him, leading to worsening his status, or even being in a life endangering position.

But be that what it may, it was something he couldn't consent to.

– (sigh)... I cannot win against someone who's prepared to throw his life away like this. In that case, I'll have you to make natas, instead of spears.

– Sorry for being selfish, but this is something I can't consent to.

By swinging with a nata, one could turn it into a malicious weapon.

However, Eiji couldn't be suspicious of that matter.

Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to make anything if he were to consider what user it is.

– In addition, please do your best in order to produce large amounts of soap. Right now it's a rare item, so the exchange rate is extremely high. What's more, if it's effective against epidemic diseases, then we absolutely do need it. These are things the tribal chief would support as well, I believe.

– I'll promise to cooperate with you. Accordingly, I'll have you reduce the tax ratio imposed on wheat.

– If it's a decrease similar to the exchange rate, then I can't do it, but I'll make sure that you get a discount.

The talk concluded.

Franko will get his hands on the new technology together with iron-made hoes and natas

Besides, at the beginning, there will be no assigned members to be deployed from Eiji's side.

Considering that Franko didn't hold an overwhelming power in the system of government, you could say that he produced a superb result.

Later, the negotiation will be completed with some minor regulations between these two.

In the end, Eiji couldn't grasp how the negotiations work.

Because there was a big difference in their sense of values, it was hard for him to grasp its principles.

The only thing which was clear is that as long as you don't clearly state your own intentions, you will be swallowed amidst the negotiations, or so they say.

Truly, Eiji, who felt inferior, couldn't look up at someone as skilled as the tribal chief.

After the negotiation concluded, everyone drank the alcohol together in the friendly atmosphere.

Compared with before, Franko felt less tension and seemed to have quite a loose posture.

Even the tribal chief softened her stern attitude, and instead adopted one with a friendly reception.

This too was a part of negotiations.

Tomorrow, after Franko goes on a stroll in order to ascertain any changes to the harvest fields, he will set off to another village.

Because he visited villages 2-3 times a year, it was said that for half of the year his duty would mostly be travelling and lodging.

As he tried to talk, he expressed his grievances for being unable to meet his wife and children. It seemed that he was just a common type of guy as well.

After Franko returned to his lodge, Eiji decided to go back home as well. Nevertheless, he was held back by the tribal chief.

– Thank you for your hard work today. You were probably surprised

by this sudden negotiation talk when you returned from doing the trade.

– It's truly as you say. I didn't know whether it was a tax collector or an inspector.

– We had an unexpectedly bad timing, so it was vexing. On top of that, that guy is actually quite bright. Nonetheless, in the end, he seemed to compromise, so we firmly achieved our goal.

– Is that so?

– Yes, while he was walking around as if being resisted by me, he cleverly managed to exact the tax from us. Well, I do not plan to stay silent and keep watching. We will build up our strength and endeavor so as to gain equal status.

For the sake of that to happen, they had to bind firmly on progressing development and creating circumstances, which would prevent any chance of proposing tax increases.

Eiji believed that the results yielded from these aims would be superb, and there was no doubt about that.

– In negotiations, it's essential to be prepared, and at the same time, force the enemy to make a blunder while striking at that right moment. This time we were not prepared well enough, so Franko didn't slip up, but still, it should be fine to force the enemy as much as possible and attack when it becomes inconsistent and weak.

– But to do that in such a short time, isn't that hard?

– You can grow accustomed to anything.

It seemed that the lesson regarding negotiations ended with that.

The silence continued for a while until the tribal chief spoke her doubt as if remembering something.

– You still haven't regained your memories completely?

– Only a part of them. Still, they're not clear enough.

-Is that so...? Drop by my house tomorrow once it's past noon. There's something I wish to show you.

– Something you wish to show me?

– Yeah. Perhaps, it could help you to regain your memories.

Eiji nodded, expressing his innermost thoughts to the tribal chief who had a stern expression.

The thing which she wanted to show was related to his own memories.

Just what in the world could it be – Eiji couldn't guess.

That day, thinking about the negotiation and his lost memories, Eiji spent the night sleepless.

Chapter 22 – The Memories

This morning was first time this ever happened – thought Eiji.

As always, he woke up as the sun began to rise, proceeding next to the morning preparations.

However, there was something different this time – That was Tanya's attitude.

Tanya, who would usually be brimming with a smile, was in low spirits today.

Her expression seemed to show nothing but being at her wit's end.

There was no energy in her movements, and the only thing that stayed the same was the delicious morning breakfast.

Just what's going on – he thought worriedly.

– Do you feel weak?

– Eh?

– Did you catch cold from getting soaked yesterday? If you don't feel well, don't try to force yourself.

Catching a cold would be a serious case.

Eiji could fry some herbs to make a cold medicine; nevertheless, in case the illness is aggravated, it could lead to pneumonia of the lungs. For children and elderly, it would mean the same as instant death.

Just thinking about her that way gave Eiji the shivers.

But Tanya shook her head toward the worried Eiji.

– My physical condition is fine.

– Is that so? But today, you seem to be depressed.

Tanya trembled her shoulders nervously.

Despite Eiji being unable to understand her emotions, it was clear that something was troubling her.

And it was the change since yesterday.

There is no doubt that it has something to do with the circumstance from yesterday, as well as the ones today.

- Is it about the tax matter from yesterday?
- Pardon?

What Eiji heard as a reply was a question filled with doubts.

- Then, it has to be something related to my memories, right?
- ...Yes.
- Are you worried about that?
- I'm a detestable woman...
- Tanya-san?

Eiji became surprised at hearing these sudden words.

The reason behind Tanya's worries were his forgotten memories.

However, Eiji was convinced that he wanted to make her happy, and at the same time make her life blissful.

Despite that, what's the meaning behind her anxiety?

- When I had been told last night about Eiji-san possibly retrieving his memories, I believed that it would be fine.

If so, why is she making such a painful expression?

While casting her eyes down, Tanya's big droplets of tears started to flow down.

- But at the same, I thought that Eiji-san will change once he retrieves his memories, and will probably no longer love me.

That's not true – thought Eiji.

He was trying to say that, but Tanya's confession didn't stop.

She disclosed her fears as if throwing the words straight out of her chest.

- Just thinking about that makes my heart painful. For a moment, I was convinced that it would be better if you don't recall at all....

I'm a failure as a wife. – she thought.

Finally, Tanya's big drops of tears, which were gathered in the corners of her eyes, burst while flowing over her cheeks without end, making her hiccup.

He wouldn't have expected for her to think about it that way. While Tanya was covering her face with hands, Eiji embraced her as if telling Tanya to show her face.

Was she thinking that Eiji would scold her? Tanya shuddered with her gorgeous shoulders while expecting that to happen.

Without being able to bind with her deceased ex-husband, she probably felt great loneliness since then.

Surely, Tanya pictured this image inside her head many times – The image of a happy family with her husband and a child, sitting together at the same table and smiling every day.

And yet the candidate for her husband, whom she had been looking for, might turn out into a different person due to his regained memories.

Eiji thought about spending everyday getting along with her, but as expected, perhaps he also felt there was an anxiety which he was unable to express in words. Such an expression was visible on his face.

He had to say it right now – words that would make her stop crying and reduce her anxiety. A word that would bring the pride of being a wife back to her.

– A child, let's have a child.

– Pardon?

– If we have a child, then there will be no doubt on whether I will leave you or not, right?

Tanya, who had an expression of doubting her ears, loosed a little bit her emotions while turning glad.

Unlike Eiji, who thought of enjoying his newlywed life, Tanya possibly wished to have a child the whole time.

– But, won't it be troublesome, since it will probably cry at night?

– That's fine.... I'll give my best to look after it.

– Furthermore, once you become pregnant, your condition might turn worse?

– Every mother has to go through the same, right? I don't mind. I want to bear Eiji-san's child.

There is probably no man that wouldn't be happy after being told of wanting to have a child. No, there is definitely none.

While embracing her shoulders, Eiji restrained his urge of pushing her down and immediately carrying out that plan. He still had an

audience with the tribal chief this afternoon.

What's more, after their marriage, he somehow became able to control his lust.

– Tanya-san, I love you. Whether I regain my memories or not, this fact won't change.

– Eiji-san, forgive me for having doubted in you...

– Please don't apologize. I'm bad at dealing with a crying woman.

As he wiped her cheek, their lips overlapped each other.

Her eyes were red from weeping her eyes out, which didn't look pretty.

However, this was part of the woman whom he loved – is what Eiji told himself.

His chest felt hot.

– Hey, cheer up. If you make that awful face, I won't be able to make advances at you, right?

– Eiji-san... you have no sense of delicacy.

Tanya, who used a sharp voice, turned sullen, only to be brimming with a smile the next moment.

— (pleasant sigh).. Indeed, this cheerful atmosphere suits her the best – thought Eiji.

The shaking of the rumbling wheels was felt in Eiji's hands.

Inside the wheelbarrow were the oil goods from yesterday's trade.

The way in which oil could be used covered a wide-range, such as quenching and cog-wheel lubrication.

Because both the rapeseed and the olive oil have a different viscosity, there was a need to determine their role separately.

If I could use the oil for various purposes... – he thought.

– Master, welcome back.

– Good morning, I'm back. Pietro, can you help me transport this luggage?

– Please leave it to me.

Pietro moved forward while pushing the wheelbarrow with enthusiasm.

It was fine to be full of spirit; nevertheless, Eiji had little bit of chill on whether or not the cart with the load would break from Pietro being unrestrained in his actions. However, it seemed to be a needless worry.

A careless blacksmith wouldn't be fit for handling numerous edged tools; notwithstanding, Pietro had skillful fingers, not to mention an obedient personality.

Whenever he was assigned to do a task, Pietro would accept it without making excuses or having any objections.

Perhaps he will become a blacksmith with a bright future – thought Eiji

He wanted to pass on to Pietro his art and knowledge as much as possible.

Eiji couldn't tell how it will turn out in the future, but as for now, Pietro was no more than a successor.

– First, let's put the oil deep inside the room.

– Got it.

Once they reached the workplace, instead of proceeding to work, they began their activity with a conversation.

Eiji thought he would tell Pietro, who was his subordinate, about the tax case.

Both of them sat at the table, facing each other.

– Good job taking care of the workshop, Pietro. Was there anything that changed while I was away?

– I received three requests for tools grinding. I did two of them, which were scythes, but the third one came from Philip, who brought his hatchet and told me to entrust it to Eiji-san. Therefore, I left it in the corner.

– Philip-san? Hm, Shall I grind it later?

The lumberjack seemed to be very pleased with his hatchet, to the extent that he wouldn't let anyone else touch it, besides Eiji.

There were a few requests, which were similar in type.

It was probably vexing for Pietro; however, he had just begun his apprenticeship. It couldn't be helped for him to be compared that

way with Eiji.

Rather than getting vexed, I'd like him to polish his skills in making springs – thought Eiji.

– Is this the end of your report?

– Yes. After that, I made some charcoal.

– Well then, I'll pass you the information which I know. You know that yesterday, there was that person called Franko?

– Yes.... My father was worried about how his next compulsory service would turn out, so I know.

– Is that so? It happened that I exchanged with him the conversation last evening, which concluded with me having to pay him with 500 arrowheads and 10 natas.

– Till now there was no need for such things?

– It's because I've recently arrived in this village. As expected, a newcomer like me, who is unable to pay, probably can't ask for much regarding taxes. Guess that would be the case.

Pietro nodded while awaiting Eiji's next words.

Was it because he was suddenly told about taxes? His pupils flickered.

– Let's have you make fasteners and arrowheads. They don't require much of strength.

– M.....Me?!

– That's right. Despite saying so, it's not much, however, you'll surely get used to making them.

-Ye...

-Ye?

– Yes!

While clenching his fist, Pietro was overflowing with great joy.

After a moment, while noticing himself his rude behavior, Pietro hurriedly adjusted his appearance. Pietro's posture felt pleasant, despite him trying with all his might to hide his joy.

Seeing him, Eiji remembered about his own dear moments.

He recalled himself being filled with enormous joy when he was allowed to make his first item.

Nevertheless, he had to give himself a warning.

Especially about Pietro, whose progress was too fast since the beginning of his lessons.

Eiji wanted him to learn the basics; however, the time was limited.

So as to teach him the skills, which doesn't lack dexterity requirements, Eiji had to pay attention.

– Still, an item is determined by whom it's made by. Depending on one's own made object, it can expose people to the danger. If you neglect even a single fastener, there may be cases where a pillar collapses and kills people. While holding the right to make things, you're also bound to bear the responsibility at the same time. That's why, don't forget about that from now on.

– Yes!

Eiji had always struck iron while keeping this in mind.

He made items, so as to please certain people.

Even though he was told to make weapons, he refused, because it run opposite to his will.

Eiji wondered whether his own master had given him the same piece of advice as he was doing now.

He tried to recall the face of his father, whom he could only remember through his hazy memories

However, this could change with today.

While thinking so, Eiji waited anxiously for the day to become noon.

Chapter 23 – The Past

It was a broad back.

The sound of the blazing flame could be heard together with the other sounds of metal being hit and the scorching iron, generating vapor the second it gets in touch with water.

Apart from the sounds, it was normal for Eiji to grow up while watching that person's back during hot and cold days, as well as during glad and sad days.

His father was a rather uncommunicative person.

He would probably talk about stuffs, such as iron and flame, even longer than his son.

Therefore, since Eiji became able to exchange his opinion with his father through his face-to-face conversations, the time when he was on a long session break from his university studies was the one enjoyable for him.

– I am going to tell you how to handle iron.

– Is it fine with you?

– I keep my promises, so consider it as a gift for your university admission. However, I don't plan to go easy on you just because you're my son.

That was the time when Eiji received his entry to the university.

Because he was occupied with his move to Osaka, as well as the university entry preparations, finding spare time was quite troublesome. Nevertheless, this was the kind of teaching which he desired from his heart.

Eiji nodded without hesitation.

– All right, come in.

– I've often watched father's back from the room, and thought all the time that someday I'd succeed you.

– If you intend to run just because I am too harsh on you, I won't care.

– That's fine. Please treat me well.

As he bowed down his head, his father scratched the tip of his nose. Eichi's face turned slightly red from being shy. Once Eiji stood inside his father's workshop, he was filled with great astonishment while making new discoveries.

Just how long does it take, and how many procedures does it require, to make a single item? This you cannot know, unless you put it into practice.

Eichi took 3 sheet of irons from the shelf, which Eiji was unable to distinguish.

– These are raw steel materials used for smithing – Yasuki hagane's^[1] blue and white steel, and this one is yellow steel.

– How do they differ?

– The blue steel has a good edge retention, while the white steel is used for easy grinding. They differ in the ratio of chrome and tungsten.

– The yellow steel?

– It's a material designed for use for common people, not for craftsmen.

– How do you distinguish them?

– You can understand by the way their sparks scatter when placed on a grinder.

– Which one is the best to deal with?

– It is determined by how you use them and your skills. The materials too are important, but, the best way you can influence them is through striking methods and by how you regulate the fire. They are also classified into grades 1 and 2, on which the amount of carbon depends, each of them varying in quenching, tempering, and temperature. You better remember that. A good artisan needs not only good skills, but also a brain.

-Understood.

Placing it on a grinder. The different amount of sparks. And then, will the flying sparks scatter like a blooming flower? Even the way they scatter is different for each when finished. These are important pieces of information.

During works, such as repairing, being able to distinguish the steel material through its spark, as well as adjusting the amount of fire, is

a crucial knowledge.

The teaching from his father was harsh.

He reprimanded Eiji whenever he would overlook the slightest detail.

At the same time, however, his father would praise him for being a person who grows properly with no flaws.

Perhaps the reason why Eiji was able to survive until his enrollment, without having any complaints, was not solely thanks to his perseverance.

– I'm back.

– You have already returned? Haven't you just begun to commute?

– But it's summer break.

– How about your tests?

– I finished them, so I was able to come back.

Since then, Eiji would return to his home whenever there was a summer break.

The more he learned about the iron, the more he couldn't understand.

It was just like a skilled actress, wearing various expressions one after another; having the glamour, but at the same time, being hard to please.

Eiji could understand the feelings of his father who used to hammer iron.

And even things that were related to his father.

Until now, Eiji had been only watching his father's private life, but once he learns to handle the metal hammer, he will be able to understand his father's thoughts from different angles beyond any words.

Even though Eichi was teaching, he would still carry out his client's daily requests.

His working life was unexpectedly busy, despite there being a scarce number of blacksmith workshops.

- Before, I used to only have customers from the neighborhood, but recently, there seems to be novices buying as well.
- That's unexpected. Were they ordering using the internet?
- Most of the ordered items were covered by that. As expected, it must have been due to the convenient use of a single item. At first, only our kitchen knives were purchased, but once they noticed its ease of use, they would tell their relatives and friends. Therefore, people who continued to buy kept appearing.
- Heh? Since we don't buy kitchen knives in a home center, we don't seem to understand that feeling.
- If we ever buy a kitchen knife from a home center, I shall resign from my business.
- That would probably be the biggest shock.
- Other than that, I was thinking about launching local developed products as an alternative. However, were I to do so, I wouldn't have any spare time.
- It would be nice, wouldn't it?
- Therefore, you need to hasten yourself and get used to this so that you can become content even with making a single grindstone.
- Got it.

Eichi knew about everything that his son wanted to know, thus, he would certainly answer Eiji's questions when asked.

It was probably for the sake of him becoming decisive when striking the iron.

One day, Eiji became eager to know more about ancient Japanese tamahagane^[2].

Because he heard that it was used in Japanese swords, he wanted to try it; however, till now, he hadn't tried talking with his father about tamahagane, not even once.

Does he not have any fond memories of it?

Naturally, the time he asks about it, he would use a careful manner of speaking.

– How about tamahagane?

–...It's a fine thing, I think. It doesn't break easily, despite being a tender type of steel. Its sharpness also has a nice edge retention. What's more, when making it, you can enjoy its characteristic side.

- It's incredible, isn't it?
- Furthermore, you can fold it back with ease, which is really nice. It's not as demanding as yasuki hagane when it comes to quenching, tempering, and maintaining the right temperature, thus, you can try it out after just several process repetitions.

Eichi answered his question with a little bit of excitement.

Was it because he was knowledgeable about the charm of tamahagane? That sort of reaction was quite unexpected from him.

- Then why won't you use it? Isn't it sold?
- We can't get our hands on it, basically, because it's only sold among swordsmiths.
- But when I checked on the internet, I found a place making it in our vicinity.
- Listen more to what your father says, won't you? However, it's impossible for me to do it alone.
- It should be fine even if we check it out?
-If it's necessary, you can buy using our name. They would probably be willing to listen to your talk.
- Is that fine?!
- It should be useful for your observation study. We can try it out however much you want.

In the end it was decided that Eiji would observe and study the tamahagane being processed.

He could finally witness the sight of forging, and feel keenly the magnitude of his boss's capacity.

Later on, Eiji would return home whenever he had a break from his studies and continue to polish his skills while being scolded by his father.

Three years after graduating, Eiji could finally attain full manhood.

Including the day he was enrolled into university, it took him 7 years.

Nevertheless, despite him becoming an adult, the same couldn't be said about his skills, which still weren't top-notch.

So as to overcome his father, Eiji continued exercising his ingenuity.

This is... That's right, I am—

The moment Eiji saw the lined objects on the table, he could understand quickly their purposes.

They were also the proof that Eiji had no connection with anyone in Siena, that he was a sudden person, wandering alone in a strange country.

These were his belongings. All of them were items impossible to recreate with this place current technology.

The clothes made from thinly colored fabric, which Eiji was pleased with.

His navy blue pair of jeans with a damage pattern, as well as his smartphone, radiating with beautiful lights.

In addition to that, there were his self-winding arm watch, which he received as a gift for his enrollment, and the leather made wallet.

Each of these objects was neatly lined up.

Apart from their shape, each of them was intact and functioning.

His cellphone wasn't working; nevertheless, once he rotates the spring in his arm watch, it will show the time in the same way.

– The first time I saw you, you were dressed much more different. Because we couldn't leave a suspicious person like that, we temporary took away your belongings. Of course, we intended to return them back to you, once you learned about your origin.

However, Eiji didn't know about his origin until now, which was due to him losing his memory.

Judging from the conversation, it was logical. Nevertheless, he understood he possessed the talent to make items with his skillful fingers, despite him not being familiar with field work, which Eiji was allowed to do.

– It had been decided that we would be looking after you, even if it meant letting you stay in the village. We thought that it was fine to apologize and return your belongings after you quickly retrieve your memories. Still, once Franko acknowledged you, we couldn't leave you alone. So, were you able to recollect your memories?

– Yes. My memories are returning back, just like priming a pump.

Minakata Eiji – that was Eiji's real identity.

His family located in Moritake city in Wakayama prefecture has a long tradition of smithing, which has continued for 8 generations.

It appeared that long time ago they were a family of swordsmiths; however, it changed with the introduction of haitourei edict^[3] that forced them to switch over plain smithing.

In order to succeed his father, Eiji moved to the public university in Osaka.

Such were his memories, which became clear as he understood.

Nevertheless, he couldn't recollect what had happened to him before he woke up in Siena village.

Why did he arrive at Siena? That cause remained unclear to him.

The last moment which stuck in Eiji's mind was him boarding a plane, heading toward a certain workshop located in Germany for an observation study.

– I see... It feels as though I can't comprehend what you're saying. So that heavy iron soared through the sky, just like a bird, and there was another big land stretching over on the other side of water....? Had I not seen these mysterious items, I would have thought you're out of your mind. Tanya can you understand anything?

– Not at all. Is that a machine? The world overflowing with multiple amazing things which Eiji-san made, I cannot imagine it. But I can understand it's a world, where no one is troubled by the lack of food, and it's wonderful, isn't it?

– Do you know the reason why this happened?

– No, that part wouldn't clear up, not even a little.

Eiji couldn't comprehend the most essential part.

His heart felt somewhere depressed.

Siena village was a comfortable place to live in; however, as long it's not his hometown, where he had lived and grown up, the environment felt different to him.

There's no way for Eiji to abandon his beloved wife, still, his attachment to his hometown was strong.

It would be nice if both things could go smoothly... – he thought.

His wishes regarding both of them were equally big, to the extent that he would desire for impossible things like this to happen.

– Well, since it's an important matter to you, it's better if you

consider them slowly. Besides that, there's one more issue. Now that you've retrieved your memories, what do you plan to do from now on?

– What I plan to do, you mean?

– If you intend to remain in this village, I shall welcome you as usual. Contrary to that, were you to set out from this place, I'll have you pay an equivalent value for the aid which we gave you.

– Grandmother! Do you really believe that letting Eiji-san go would solve the problem?

– That's not what I mean. Since he is the beloved man of my granddaughter, I deeply wish for him to remain. I was able to encourage him to stay because he had lost his memory, but now that he's regained them, it's up to him to decide.

Hearing the tribal chief's words, Tanya objected as she threw her doubt with full force at her.

Despite that, the words coming from the tribal chief were calm and emotionless.

– I'm against that. After all, he promised me!

– Eiji. You should decide at your own convenience.

– Grandmother!

– But, I shall give you an advice. I don't think you will be able to return to the place from where you came from. Therefore, I don't think it's a bad idea to live this way in the village after making a wife.

Eiji's answer was already decided.

He intended to remain here and have a child together with Tanya, as well as make his effort as the blacksmith, in order to make this village prosper.

But for some reason he couldn't say it straight away.

Why is that, what's the matter? – he thought. Was it because he didn't think so that he was hesitating?

Seeing how Eiji couldn't express himself, the atmosphere inside the room froze.

Tanya's heart was pounding within her chest while her eyes began to fill with tears.

It was a painful sight; nevertheless, Eiji couldn't utter that single important word. It was as though he inherited that trait of being a

poor talker from his father.

At the same time, someone was knocking the door.

– Who's there?

– Tribal chief, it's me Bernard.

– What business might you have? We are in the middle of the important talk.

– I heard that Eiji was here, so I wanted to convey some words to him.

– Well, fine... you may enter

As the door opened, Bernard entered in.

His trousers were stained with soil, which would indicate he was in the middle of field work.

Once he eyed Eiji, he smiled pleasantly.

– Because you were out on your trade trip, I couldn't convey what I wanted, but, you probably remember about telling me the seed sowing method before.

– Yes, from that time I wasn't able to make you the sowing tool, but...

– It's not regarding that. Since when I was told about that sowing method, buds began to grow rapidly, so I wanted to thank you no matter what – Thank you. Thanks to you, I can finally cultivate spacious fields and use the remaining part for eating.

Ah, so it was because of that?

The people here were able to enjoy their life because of what he had left to them.

Eiji suddenly felt real.

Because it was something he knew, he would also watch people being pleased.

Eiji knew that the things which he made one by one would become useful.

Nevertheless, to be appreciated this much by using a bit of knowledge, it made Eiji happy.

That feeling was something that Eiji hadn't feel as strong until now.

If he were to return to the place once he belonged, he could probably enjoy making many things.

However, it wouldn't give him the sense of being needed as much as it does here.

This was the place, in which Eiji was able to make the best of him by being here.

- Tribal chief, Tanya-san, please listen to me.
- Let's hear it.
- Yes...
- I am staying in this village. I've decided to become this village's strength, so as to make it flourish, even if it's just a little.
- I see...
- Eiji-san!

Seeing the tribal chief nodding with satisfaction, together with Tanya who felt deep joy, Eiji was convinced that this was the right decision,

- I... wonder whether I'm not interrupting.
- That's not true. You came just the right moment. I too am greatly thankful for that. From now on, please treat me well.
- Oh, me too, please treat me well.(broken accent)

Bernard probably didn't know what was happening.

As well as what was he doing while raising his hand cheerfully saying 'please treat me well.'

However, there was no doubt that his words gently spread Eiji's wings.

Like that, Minakata Eiji — Eiji swore to become once again the member of this village.

This would later become the big turning point for the village.

Notes

1. special type of steel produced by Hitachi, for more details: [link](#)

Also here's some more info regarding grade 1 and 2 matter, which later appears in the text: [link](#)

If you can grasp those technical terms, you should be able to understand, unlike me <.<

And here how the paper steel looks more or less I believe: [link](#)

2. Type of steel made from iron sand or black sand: [Wikipedia](#)
3. And here's some history lesson: [Wikipedia](#)

Credits

Author

(肥前文俊) Fumitoshi Hizen

Illustrator

Three

Translator

[Hachidori108](#)

Book designer

[Armaell](#)